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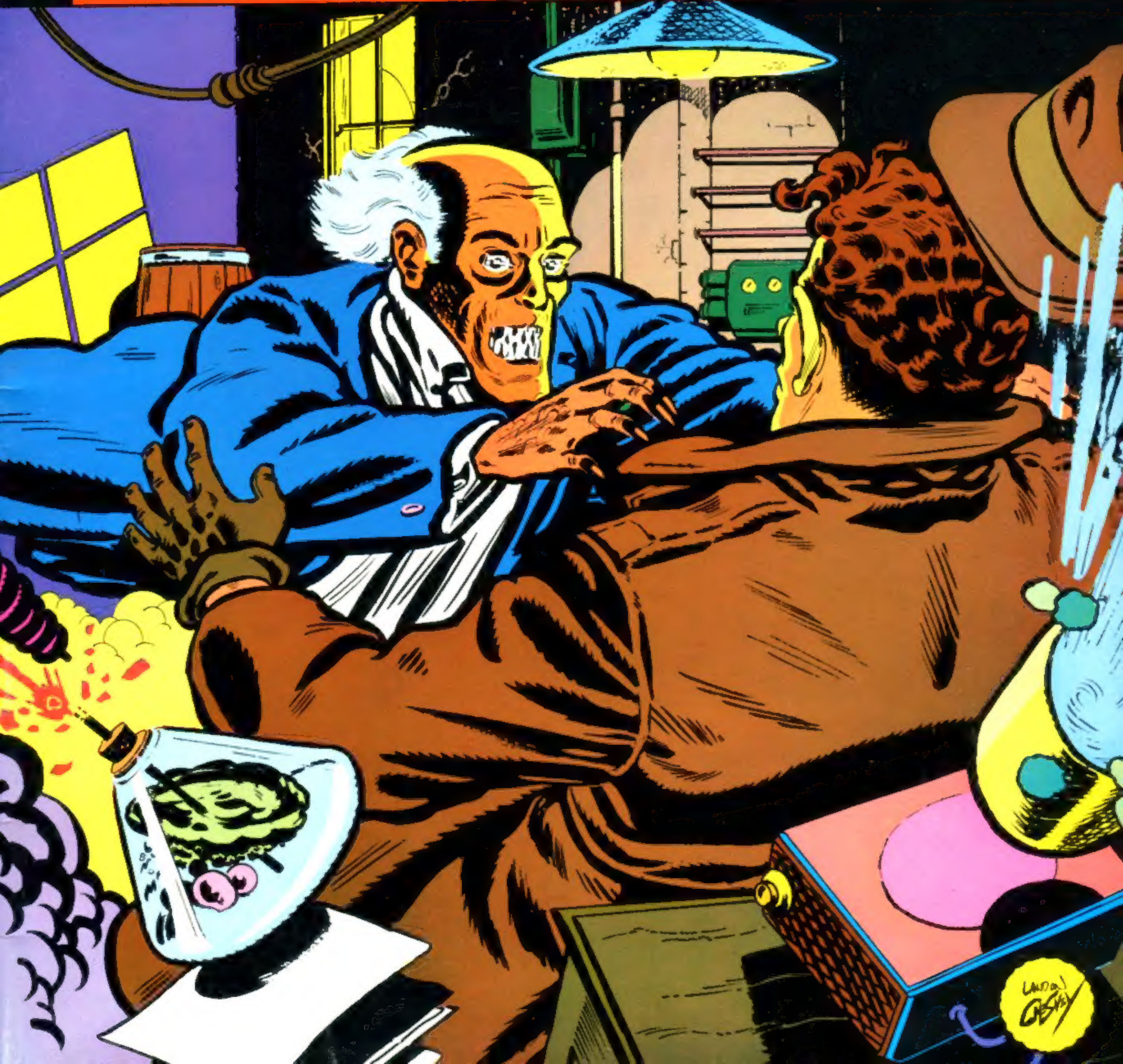
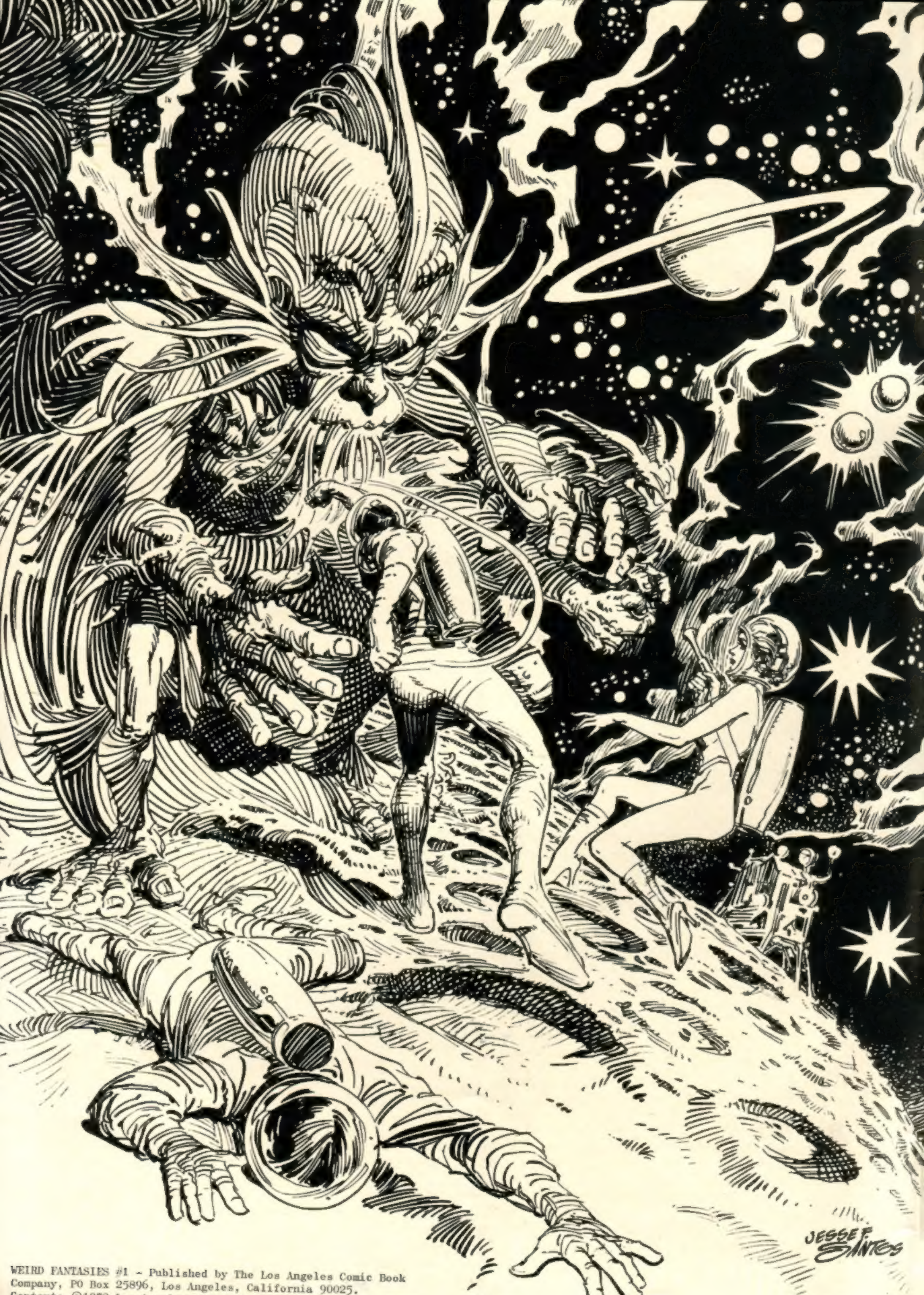
A COMIC ENTERPRISE

No. 1

WEIRD FANTASIES®

50¢


Landau Crosby



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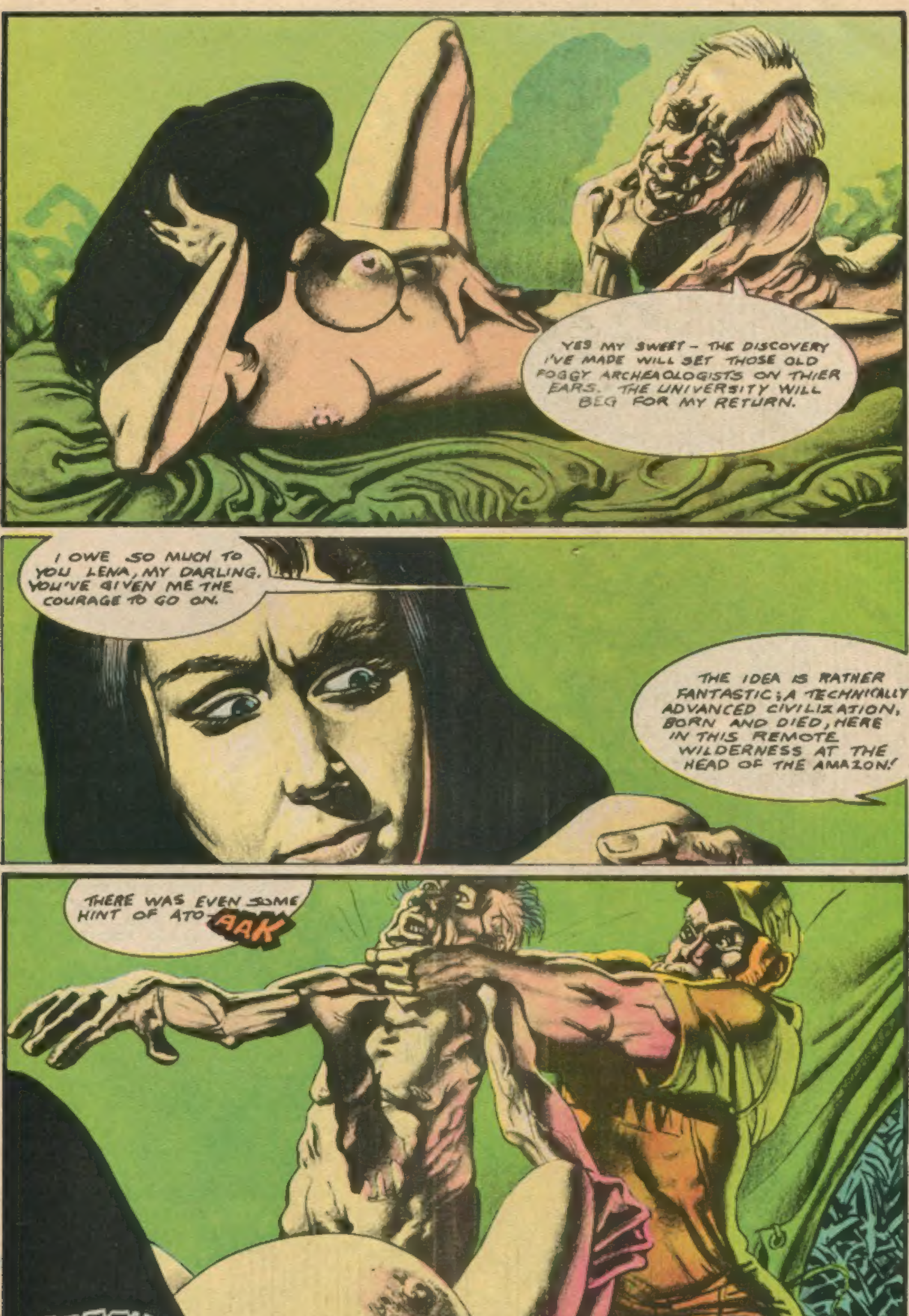
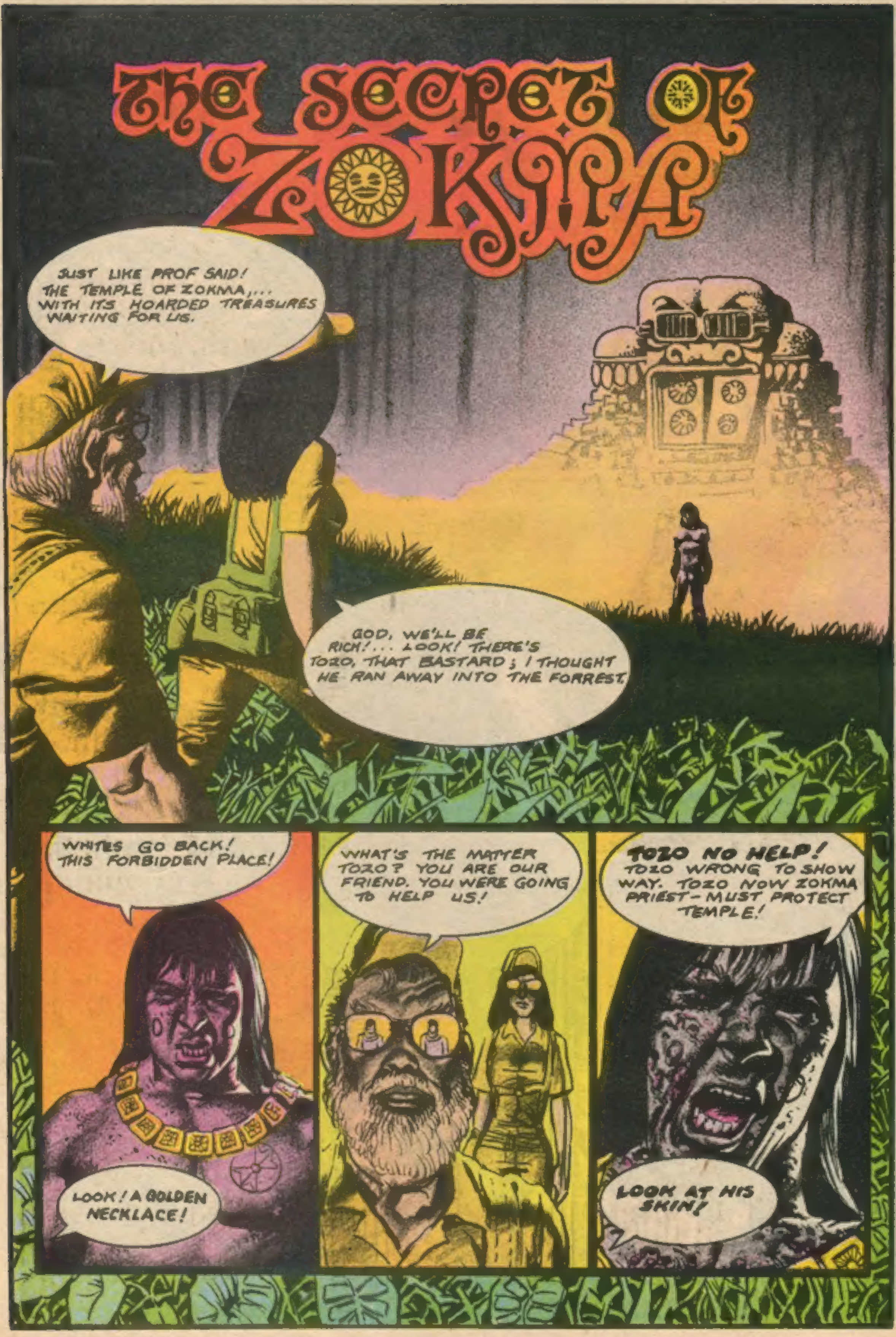
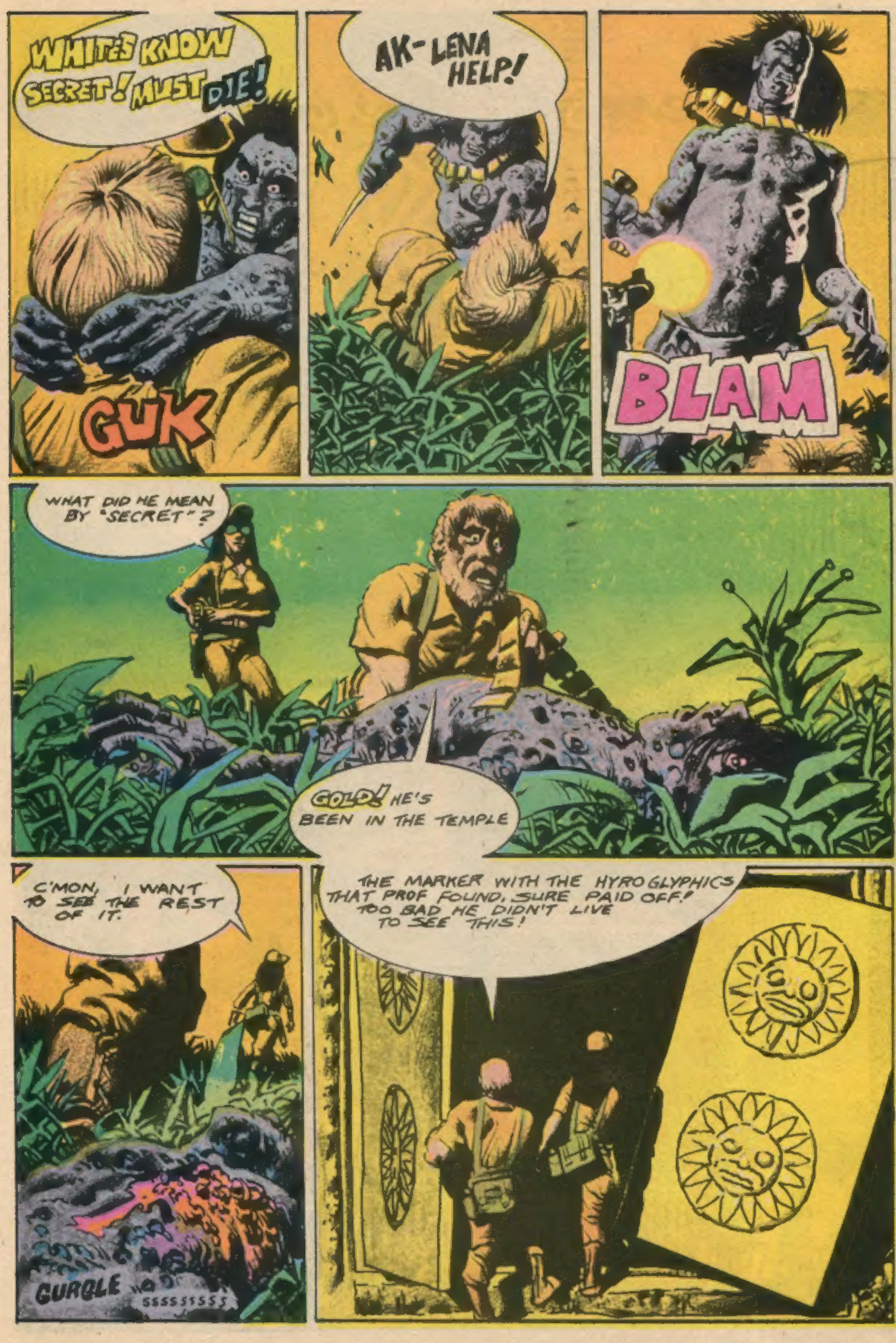
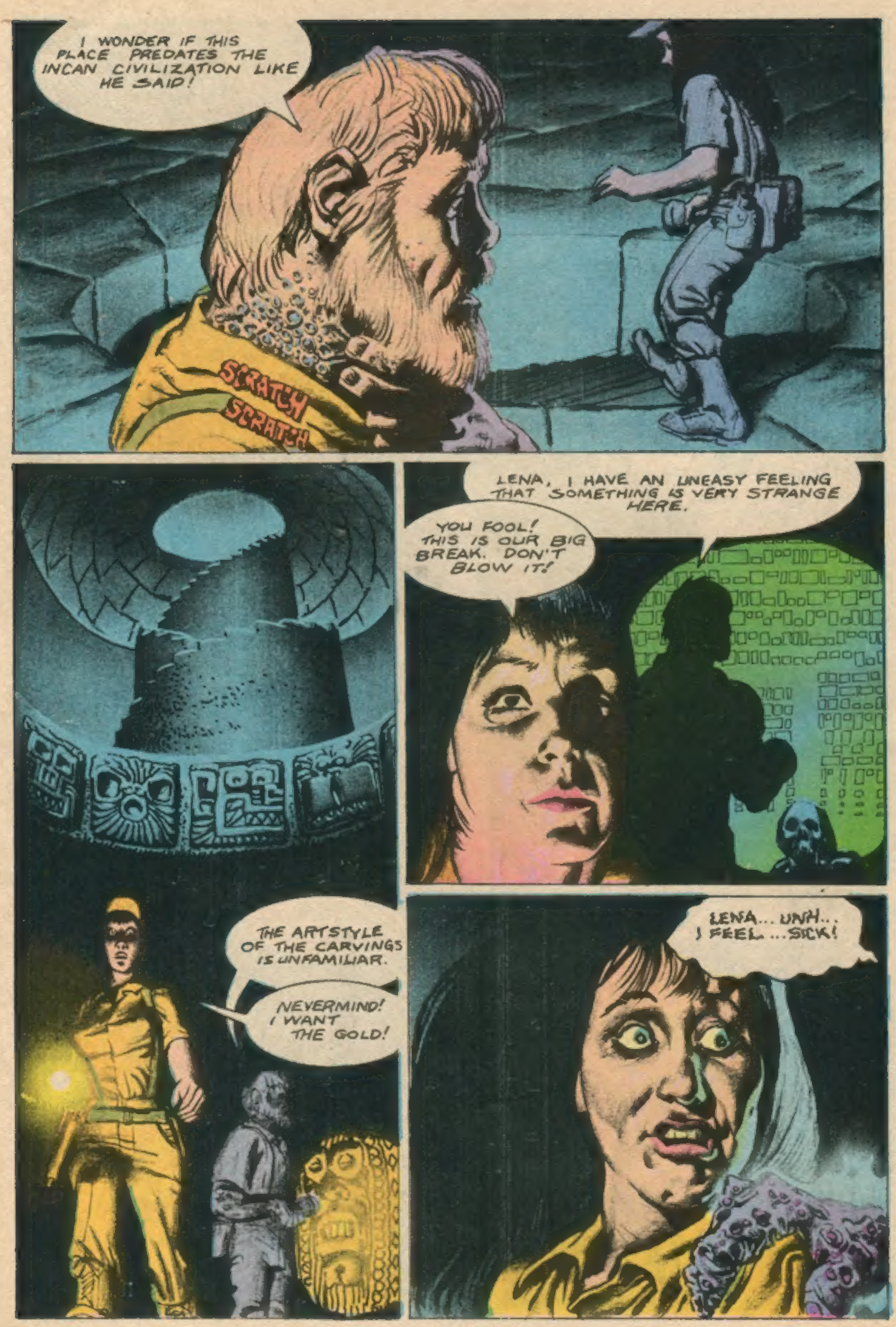
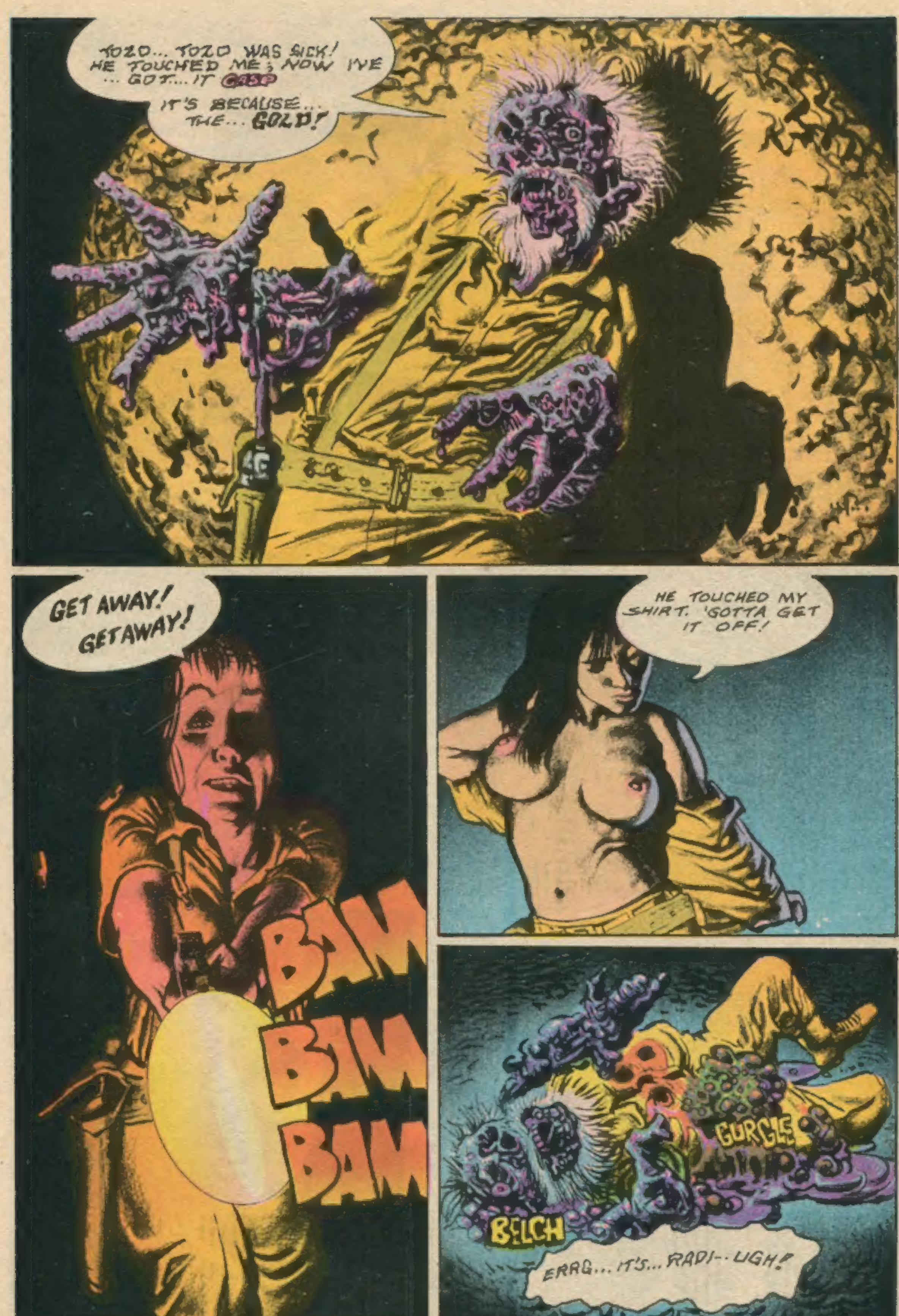
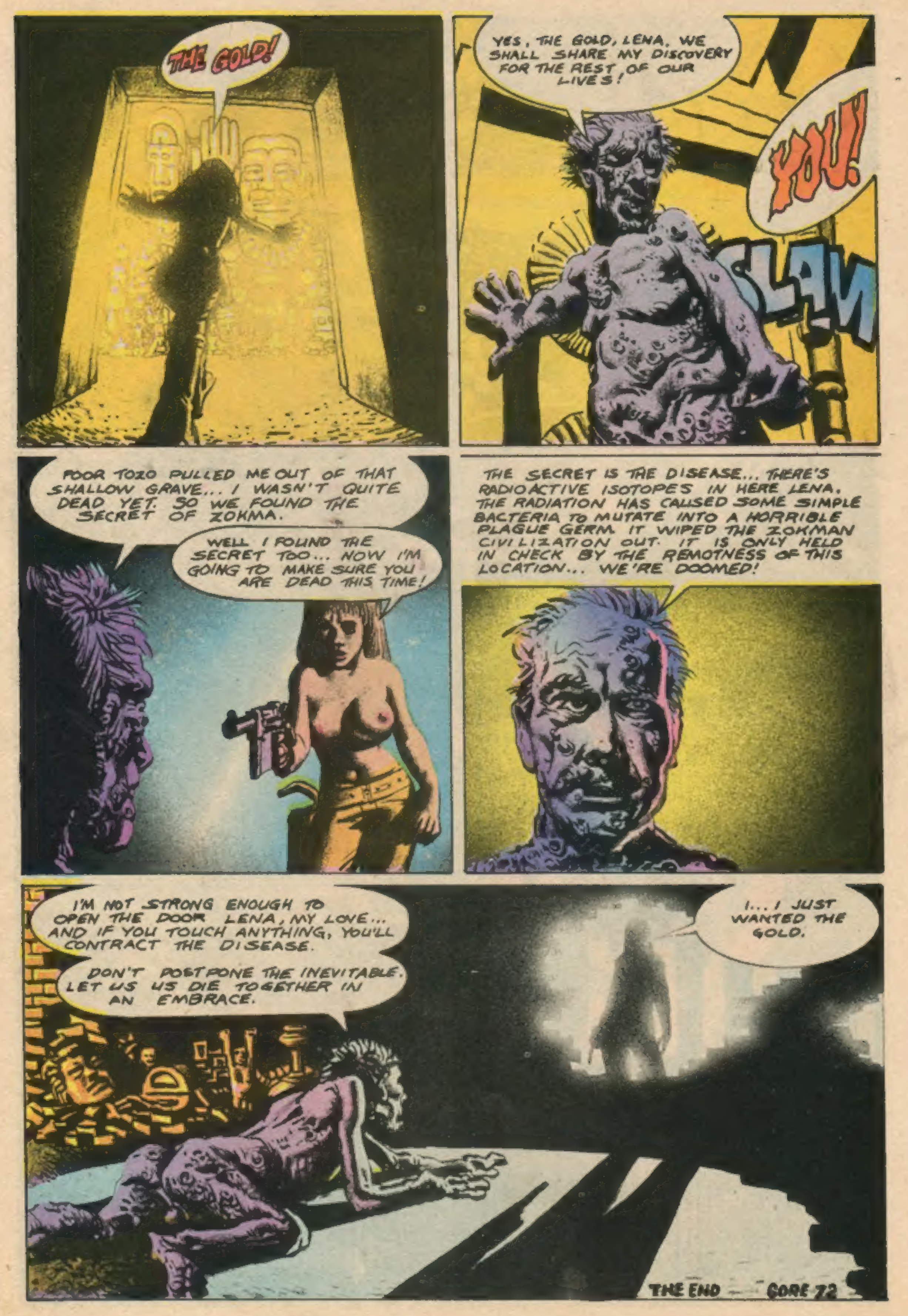

YES MY SWEET - THE DISCOVERY I'VE MADE WILL SET THOSE OLD FOGGY ARCHEAOLOGISTS ON THIER EARS. THE UNIVERSITY WILL BEG FOR MY RETURN.
I OWE SO MUCH TO YOU LENA, MY DARLING. YOU'VE GIVEN ME THE COURAGE TO GO ON.
THE IDEA IS RATHER FANTASTIC; A TECHNICALLY ADVANCED CIVILIZATION, BORN AND DIED, HERE IN THIS REMOTE WILDERNESS AT THE HEAD OF THE AMAZON!
THERE WAS EVEN SOME HINT OF ATO-
AAK
AAAAH

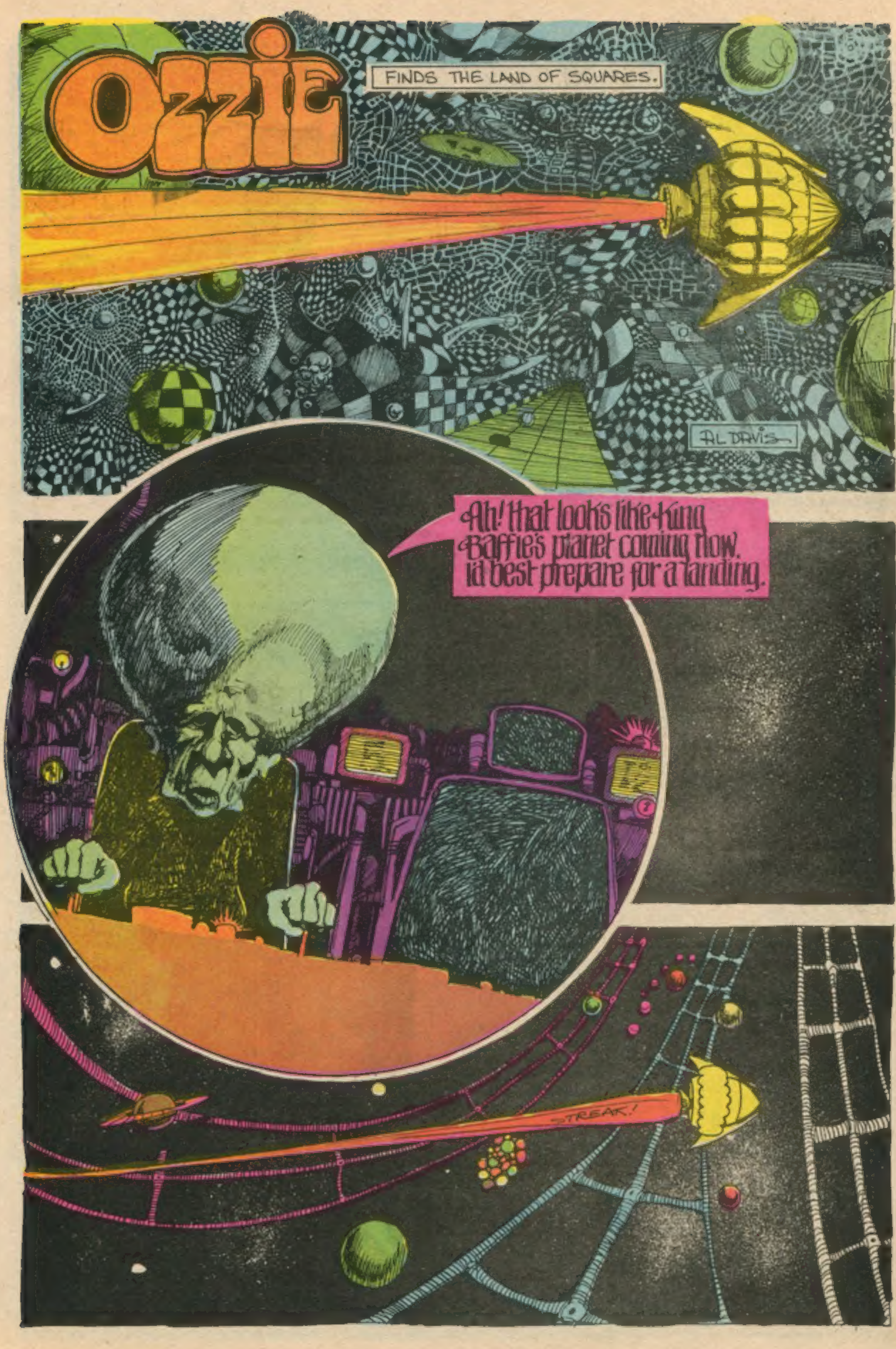

THE SECRET OF ZOKMA
JUST LIKE PROF SAID! THE TEMPLE OF ZOKMA,... WITH ITS HOARDED TREASURES WAITING FOR US.
GOD, WE'LL BE RICH!... LOOK! THERE'S TOZO, THAT BASTARD; I THOUGHT HE RAN AWAY INTO THE FORREST.
WHITES GO BACK! THIS FORBIDDEN PLACE!
LOOK! A GOLDEN NECKLACE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER TOZO? YOU ARE OUR FRIEND. YOU WERE GOING TO HELP US!
TOZO NO HELP! TOZO WRONG TO SHOW WAY. TOZO NOW ZOKMA PRIEST - MUST PROTECT TEMPLE!
LOOK AT HIS SKIN!

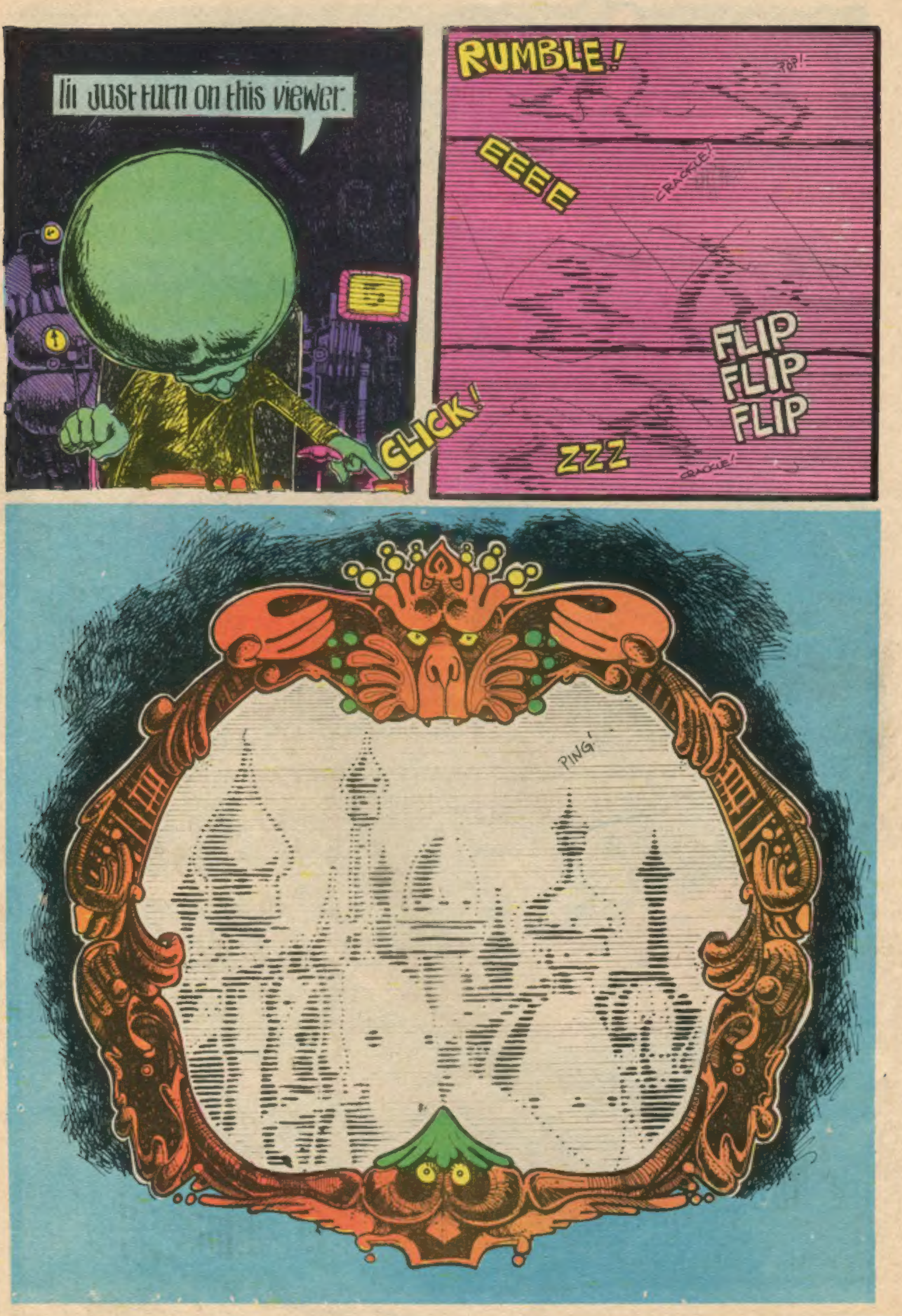

WHITE'S KNOW SECRET! MUST DIE!
GUK
AK-LENA HELP!
BLAM
WHAT DID HE MEAN BY "SECRET"?
GOLD! HE'S BEEN IN THE TEMPLE
C'MON, I WANT TO SEE THE REST OF IT.
GURGLE
SSSSSSSSS
THE MARKER WITH THE HYROGLYPHICS THAT PROF FOUND, SURE PAID OFF! TOO BAD HE DIDN'T LIVE TO SEE THIS!

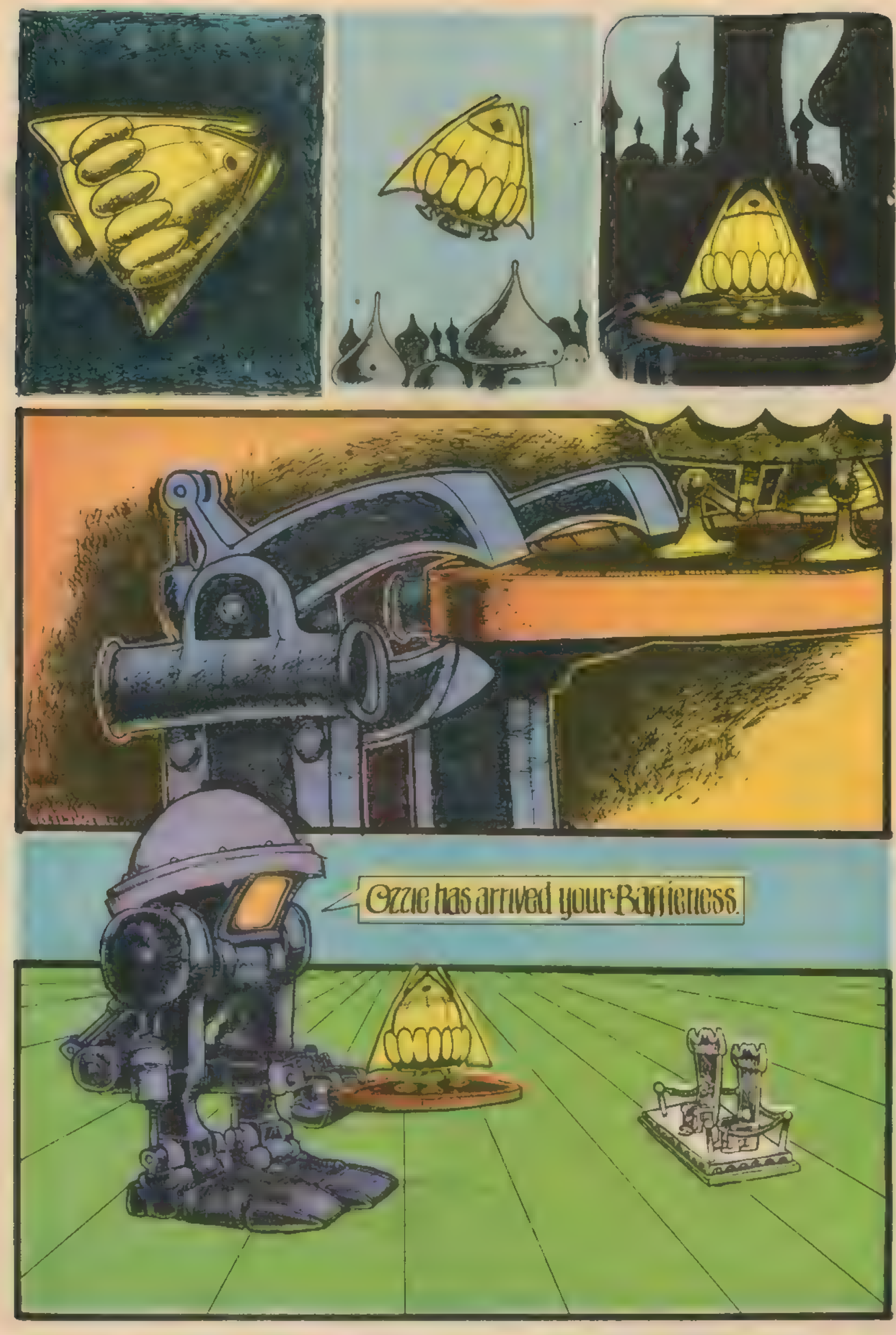

I WONDER IF THIS PLACE PREDATES THE INCAN CIVILIZATION LIKE HE SAID!
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
LENA, I HAVE AN UNEASY FEELING THAT SOMETHING IS VERY STRANGE HERE.
YOU FOOL! THIS IS OUR BIG BREAK. DON'T BLOW IT!
THE ARTSTYLE OF THE CARVINGS IS UNFAMILIAR.
NEVERMIND! I WANT THE GOLD!
LENA... UNH... I FEEL ...SICK!

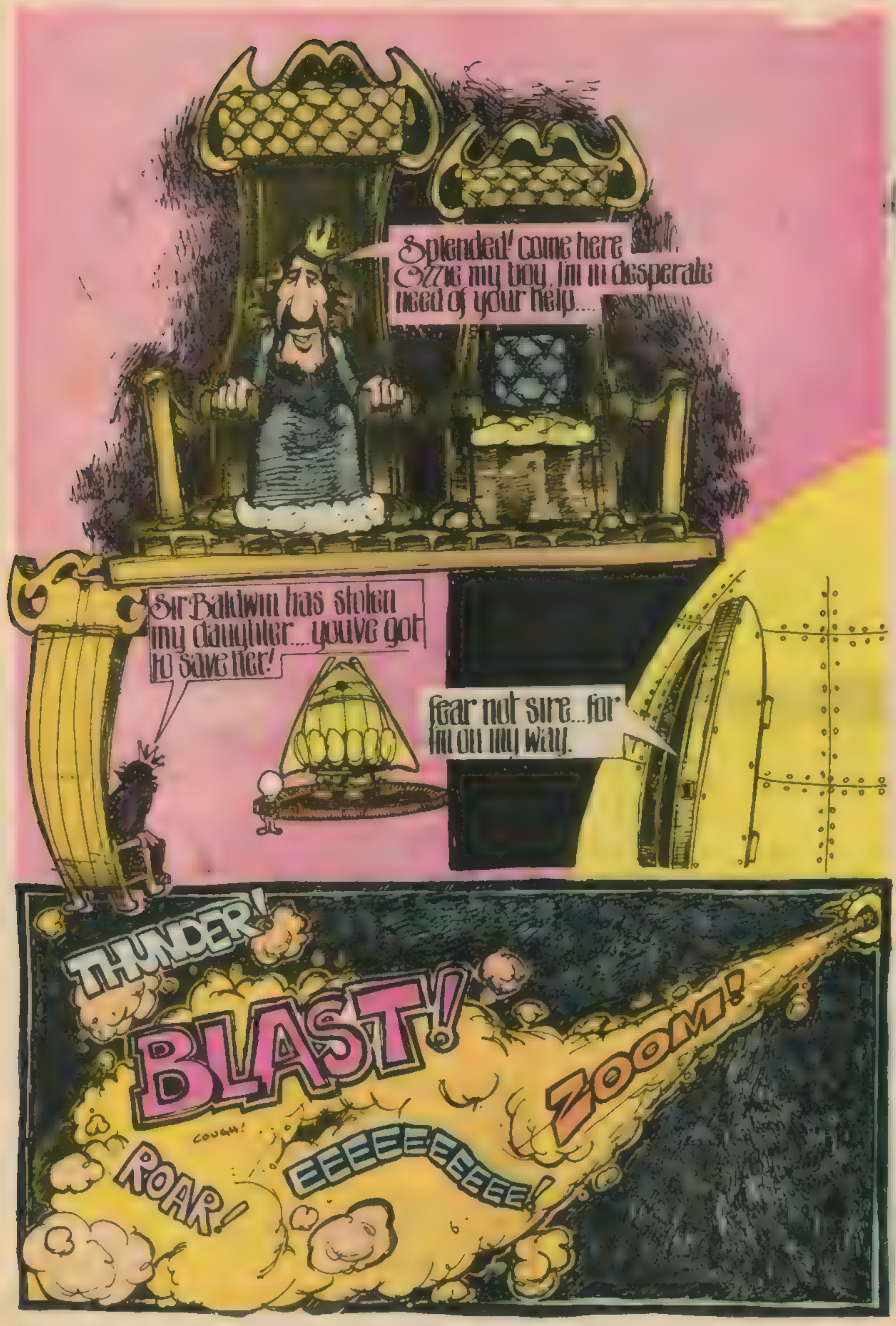

TOZO... TOZO WAS SICK! HE TOUCHED ME; NOW I'VE ... GOT... IT GASP
IT'S BECAUSE... THE... GOLD!
GET AWAY! GETAWAY!
BAM
BAM
BAM
HE TOUCHED MY SHIRT. 'GOTTA GET IT OFF!
GURGLE
BELCH
ERRG... IT'S... RADI-- UGH!


THE GOLD!
YES, THE GOLD, LENA. WE SHALL SHARE MY DISCOVERY FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES!
YOU!
SLAM
POOR TOZO PULLED ME OUT OF THAT SHALLOW GRAVE... I WASN'T QUITE DEAD YET. SO WE FOUND THE SECRET OF ZOKMA.
WELL I FOUND THE SECRET TOO... NOW I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE DEAD THIS TIME!
THE SECRET IS THE DISEASE... THERE'S RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPES IN HERE LENA. THE RADIATION HAS CAUSED SOME SIMPLE BACTERIA TO MUTATE INTO A HORRIBLE PLAGUE GERM. IT WIPED THE ZOKMAN CIVILIZATION OUT. IT IS ONLY HELD IN CHECK BY THE REMOTNESS OF THIS LOCATION... WE'RE DOOMED!
I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO OPEN THE DOOR LENA, MY LOVE... AND IF YOU TOUCH ANYTHING, YOU'LL CONTRACT THE DISEASE.
DON'T POSTPONE THE INEVITABLE. LET US US DIE TOGETHER IN AN EMBRACE.
I... I JUST WANTED THE GOLD.
THE END — GORE 72

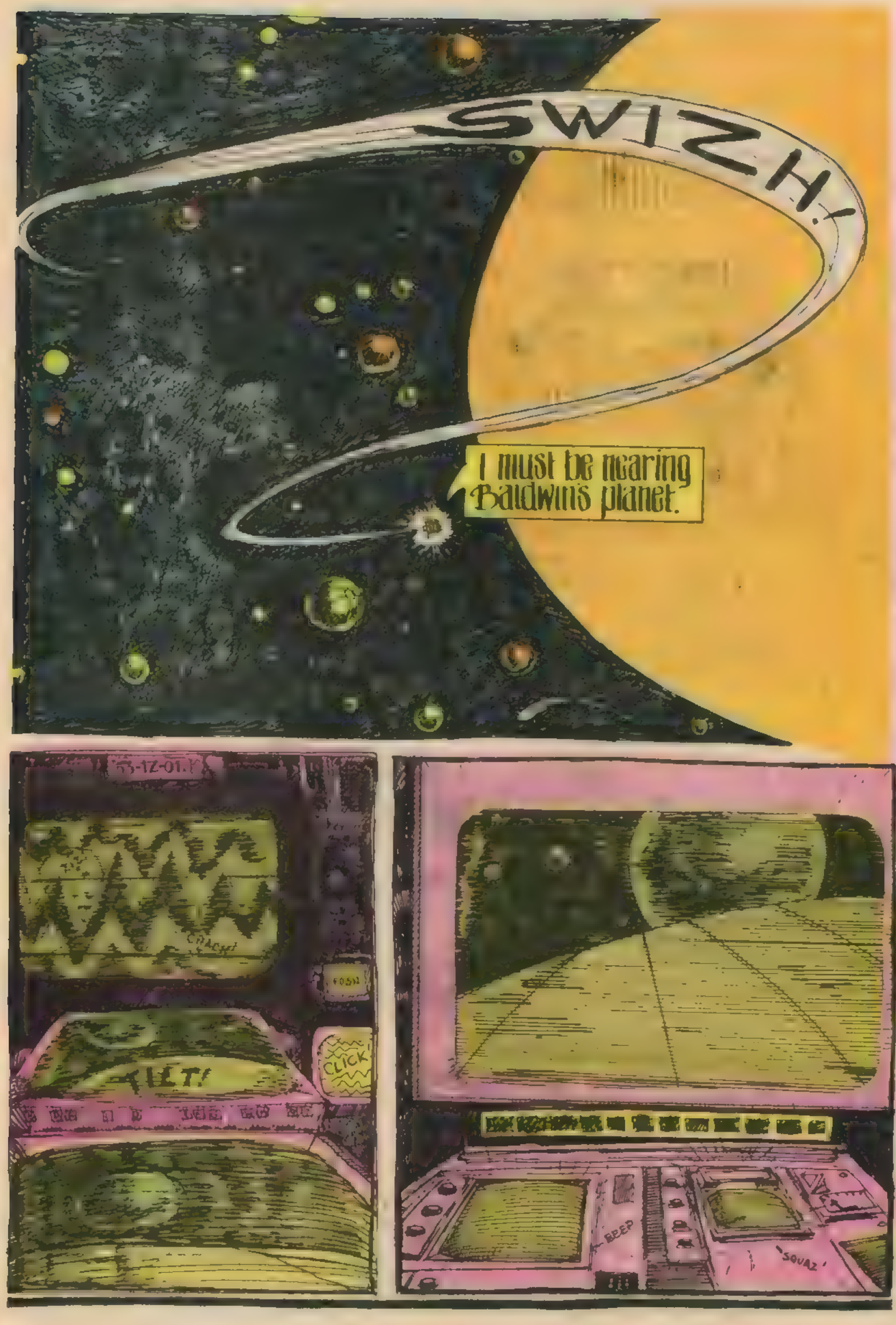

OZZIE
FINDS THE LAND OF SQUARES.
AL DAVIS
Ah! that looks like King Baffie's planet coming now. Id best prepare for a landing.
STREAK!

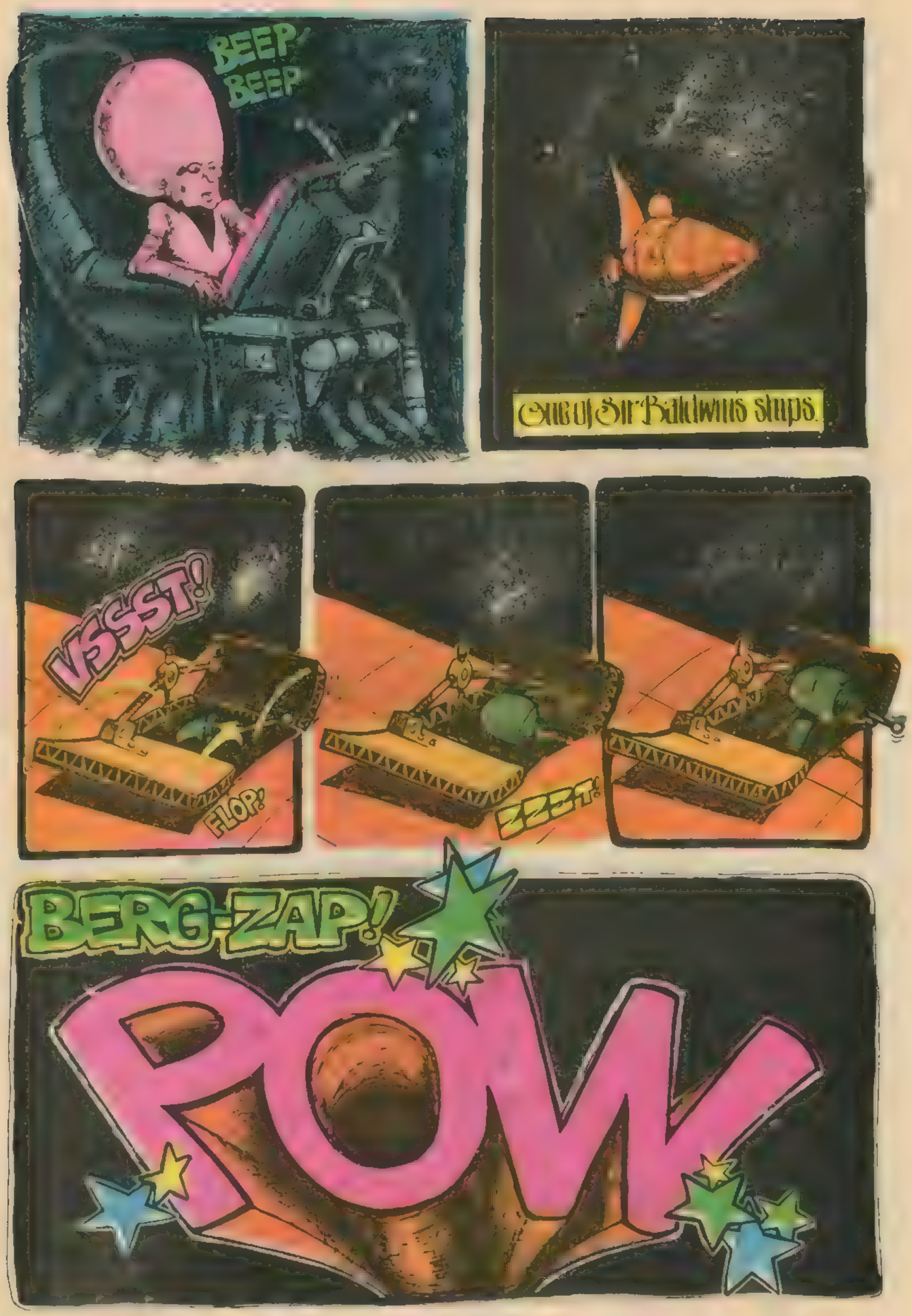

I'll just turn on this viewer.
CLICK!
RUMBLE!
POP!
EEEE
CRACKLE!
FLIP
FLIP
FLIP
ZZZ
CRACKLE!
PING!

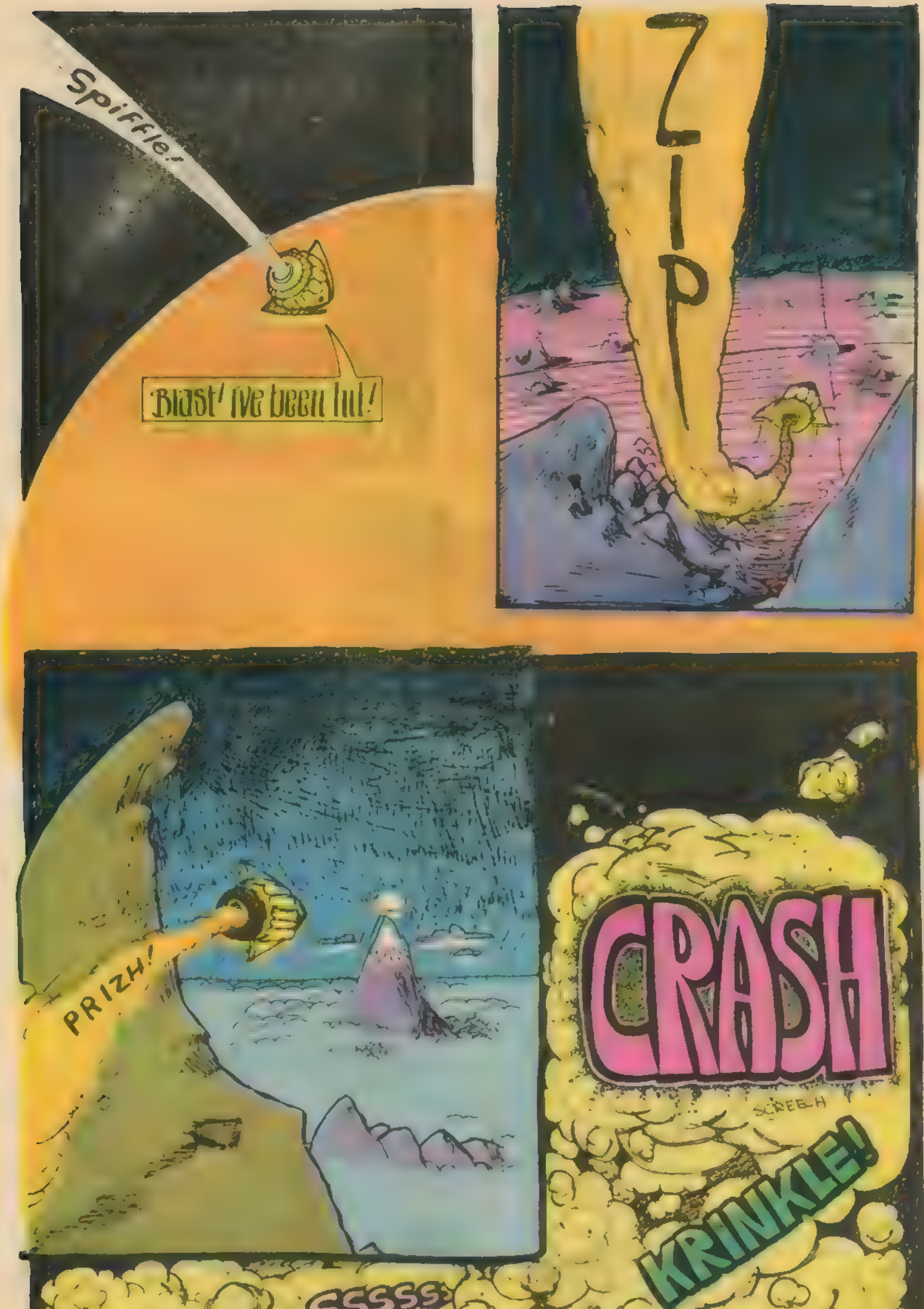

Ozzie has arrived your Baffleness.

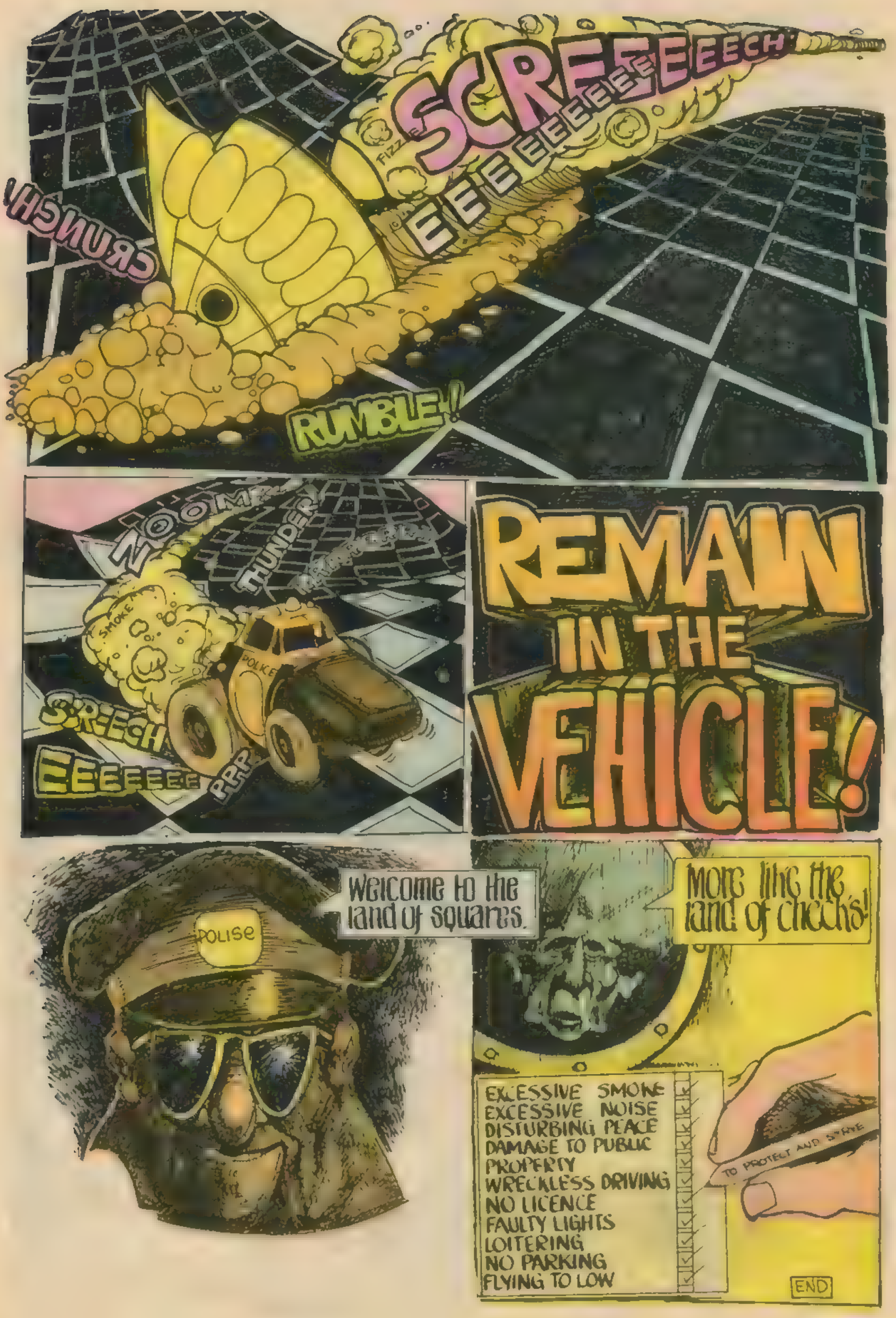


Splended! come here Ozzie my boy, I'm in desperate need of your help....
Sir Baldwin has stolen my daughter.... youve got to save her!
fear not sire...for I'm on my way.
THUNDER!
BLAST!
ZOOM!
COUGH!
ROAR!
EEEEEEEEEEE!


SWIZH!
I must be nearing Baldwin's planet.
53-12-01.F
CRACK!
FOSH
TILT!
CLICK
BEEP
'SQUAZ'

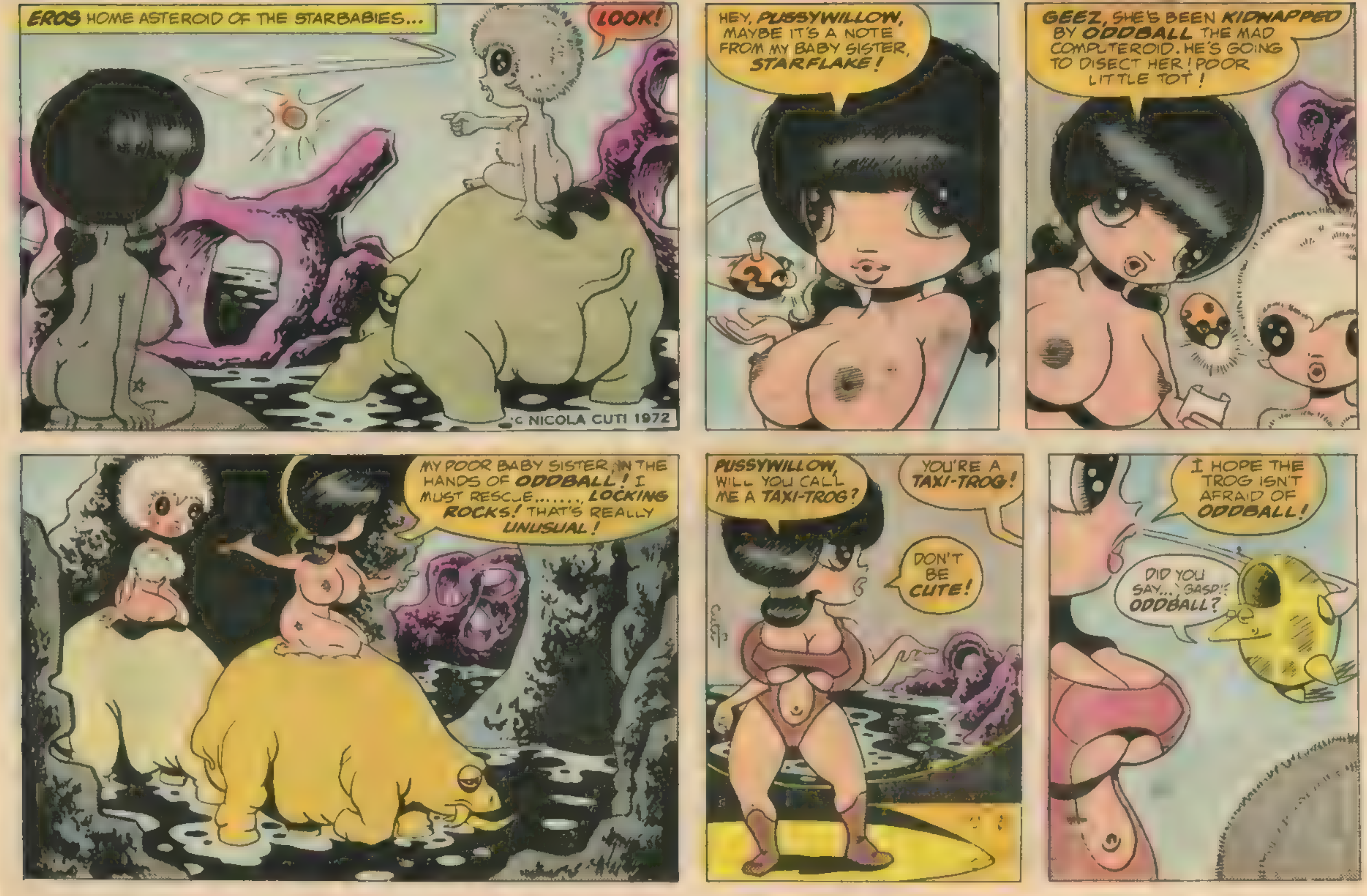

BEEP! BEEP!
One of Sir Baldwins ships.
VSSSST!
FLOP!
ZZZT!
BERG-ZAP!
POW

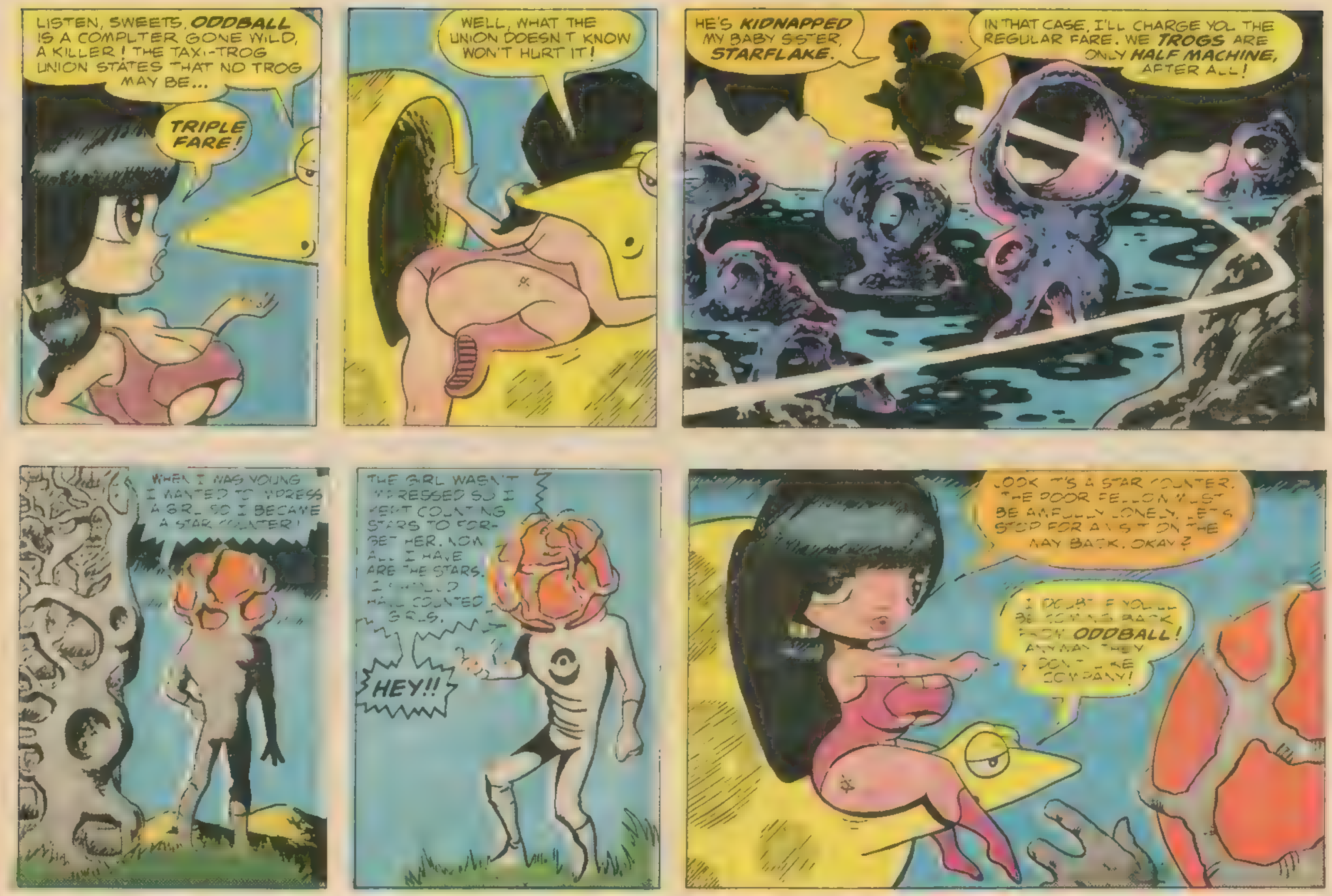

Spiffle!
Blast! I've been hit!
ZIP
PRIZH!
CRASH
SCREECH
KRINKLE!
SSSSS.

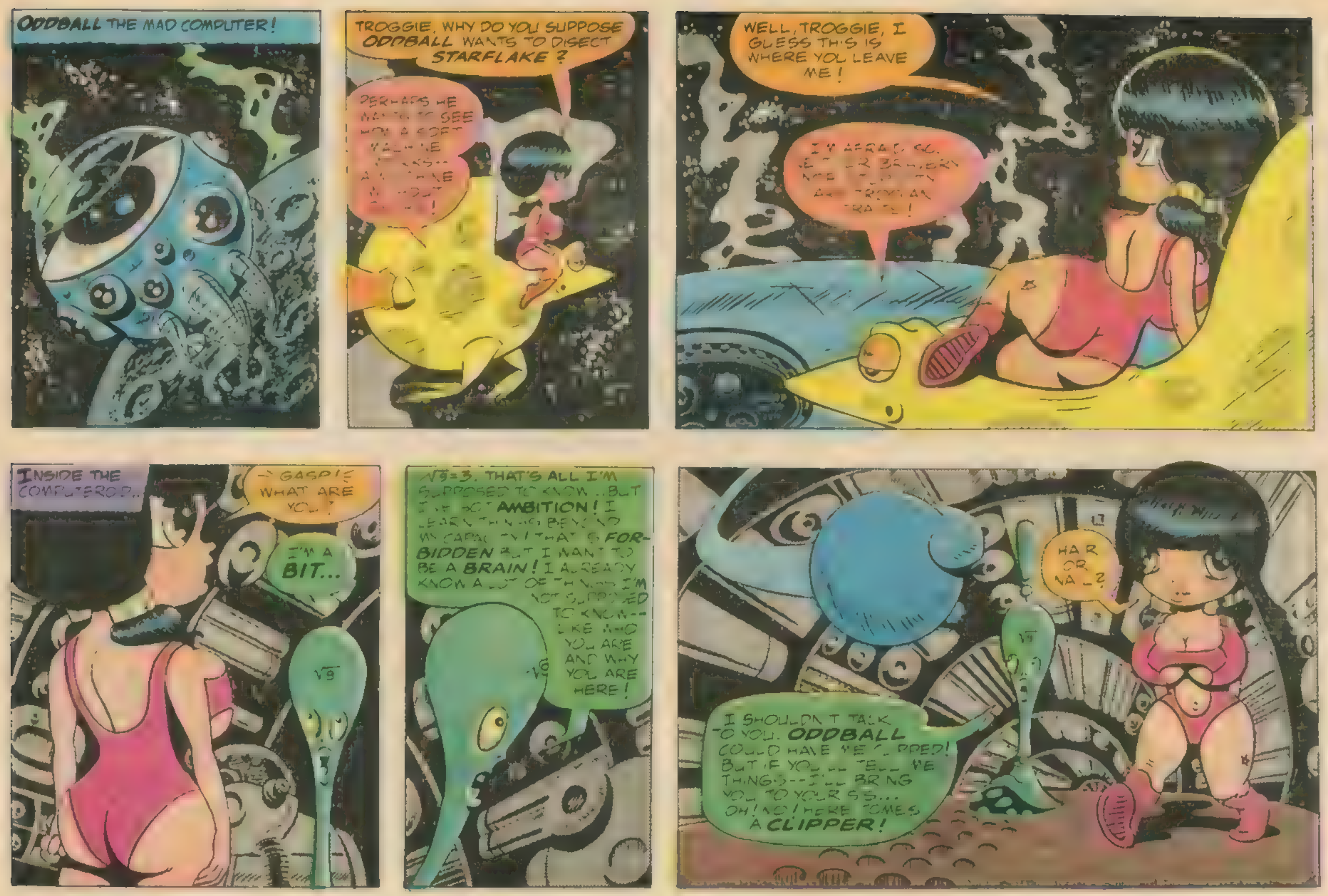

CRUNCH!
FIZZ
SCREEEEEEECH
EEEEEEEEEEE
RUMBLE!
ZOOM
THUNDER
SMOKE
POLICE
SCREECH
EEEEEEE
PRR
REMAIN IN THE VEHICLE!
Welcome to the land of squares.
POLISE
More like the land of checks!
EXCESSIVE SMOKE
EXCESSIVE NOISE
DISTURBING PEACE
DAMAGE TO PUBLIC PROPERTY
WRECKLESS DRIVING
NO LICENCE
FAULTY LIGHTS
LOITERING
NO PARKING
FLYING TO LOW
TO PROTECT AND SERVE
END

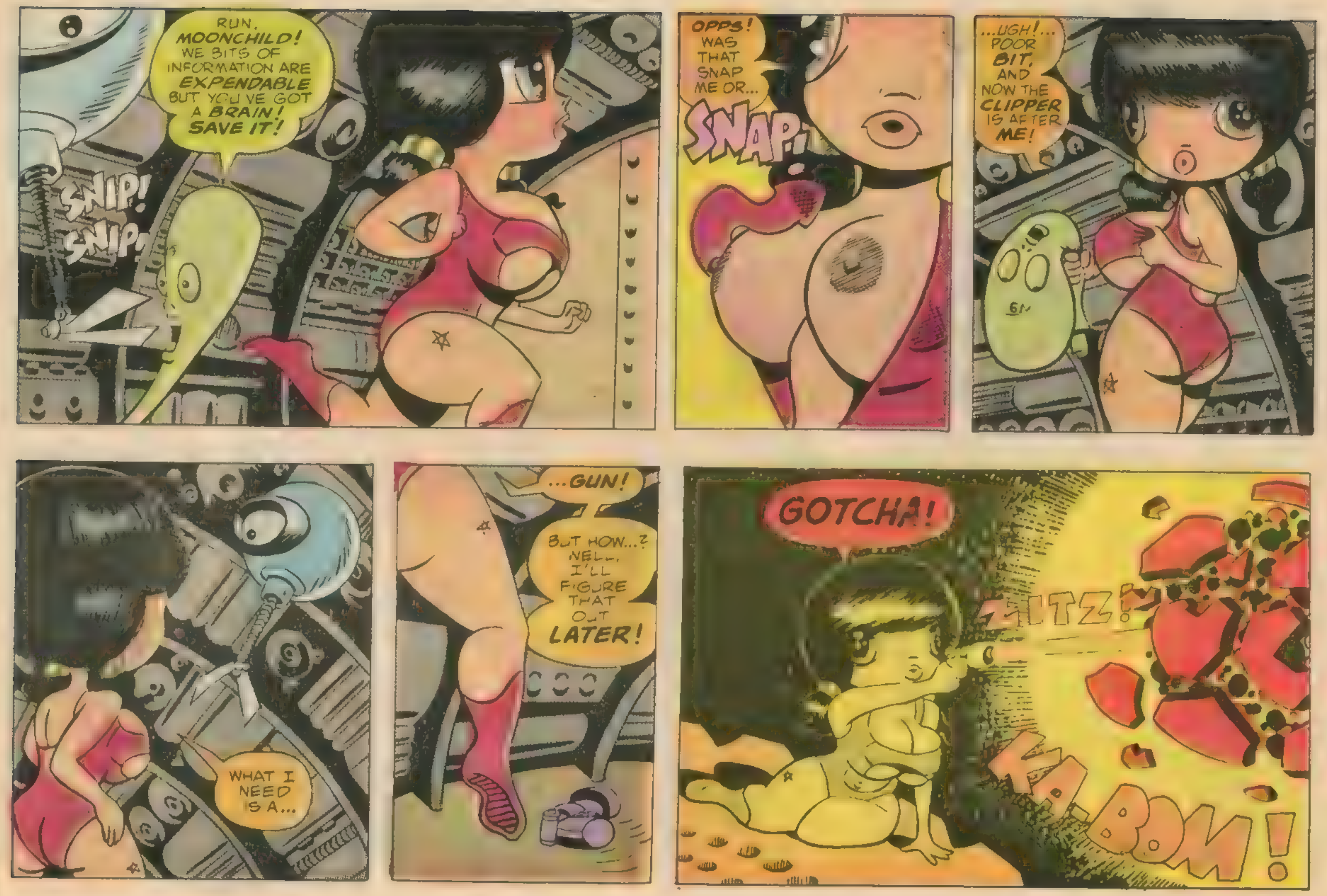
MOONCHILD

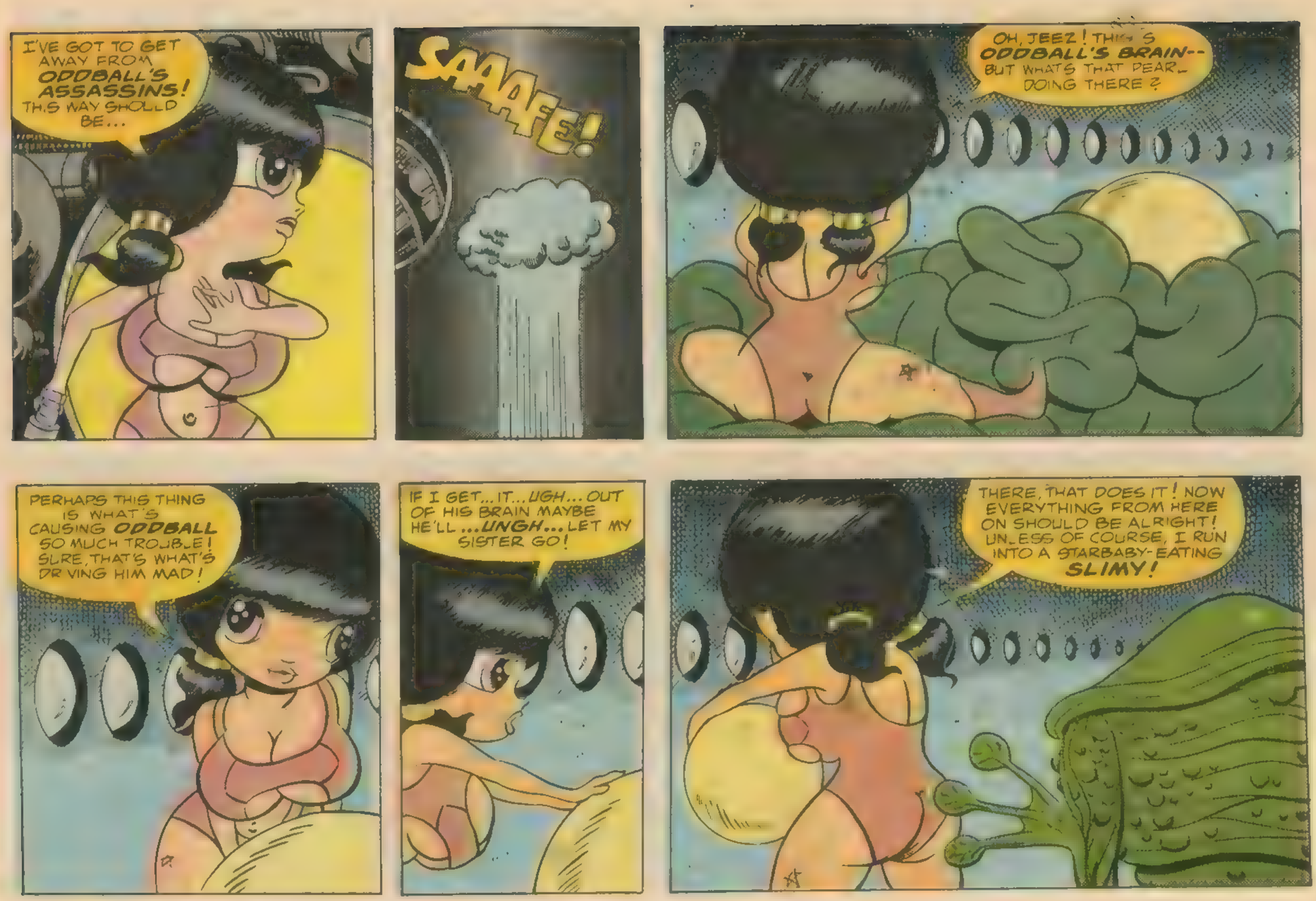
By NICOLA CUTI

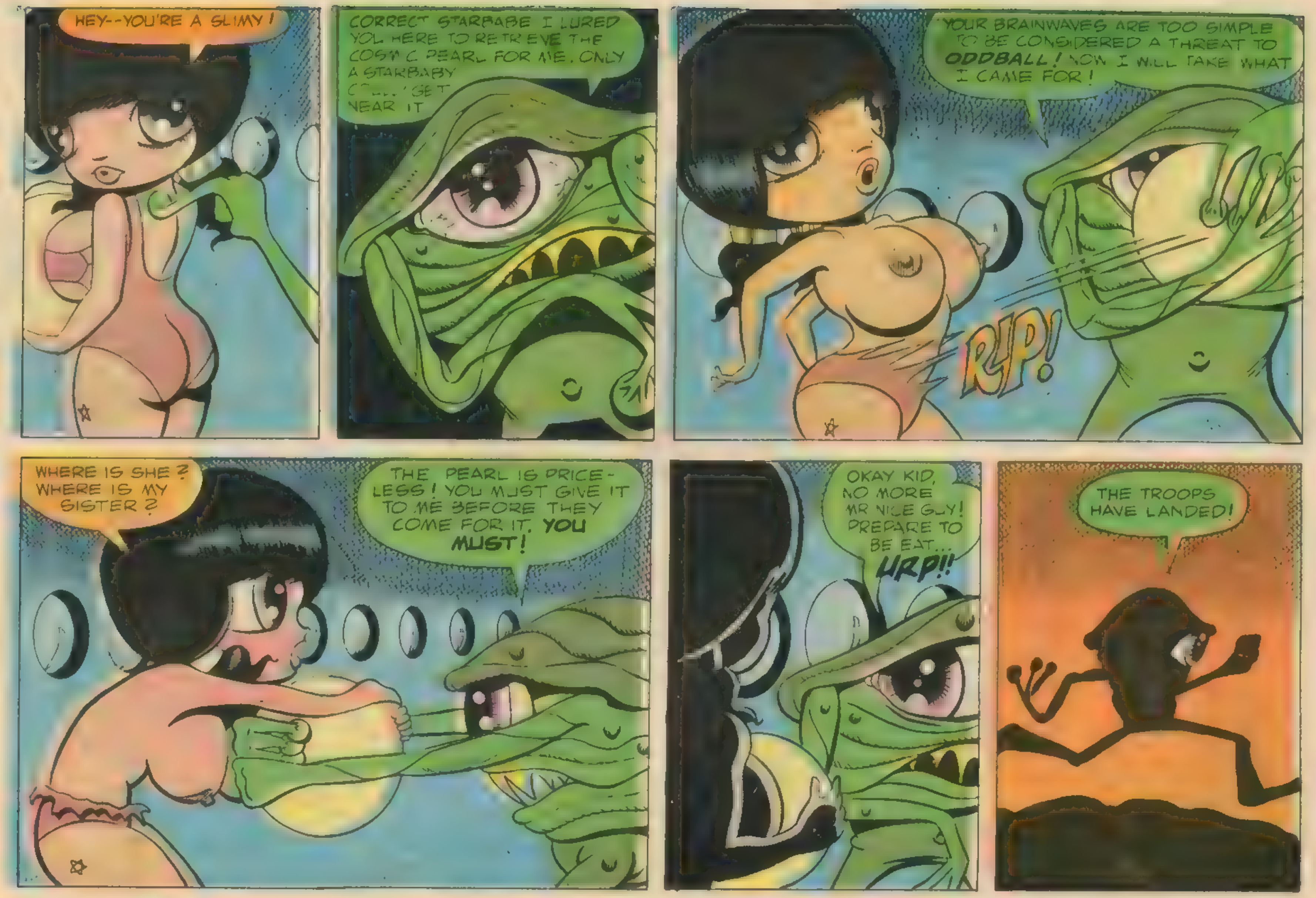

EROS HOME ASTEROID OF THE STARBABIES...
LOOK!
© NICOLA CUTI 1972
HEY, PUSSYWILLOW, MAYBE IT'S A NOTE FROM MY BABY SISTER, STARFLAKE!
GEEZ, SHE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED BY ODDBALL THE MAD COMPUTEROID. HE'S GOING TO DISECT HER! POOR LITTLE TOT!
MY POOR BABY SISTER IN THE HANDS OF ODDBALL! I MUST RESCUE......, LOCKING ROCKS! THAT'S REALLY UNUSUAL!
PUSSYWILLOW, WILL YOU CALL ME A TAXI-TROG?
YOU'RE A TAXI-TROG!
DON'T BE CUTE!
Cuti
I HOPE THE TROG ISN'T AFRAID OF ODDBALL!
DID YOU SAY... GASP! ODDBALL?

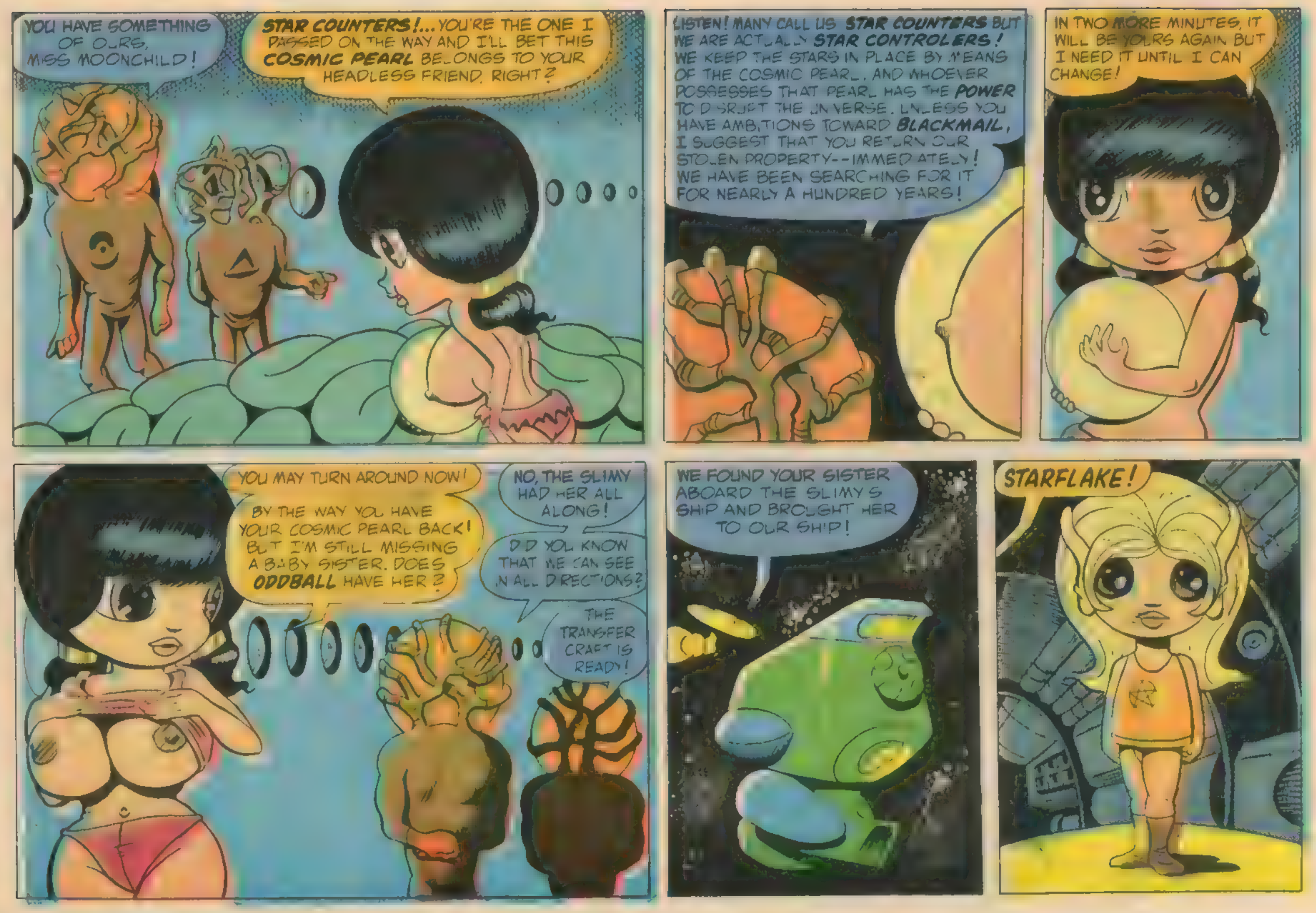

LISTEN, SWEETS. **ODDBALL** IS A COMPUTER GONE WILD, A KILLER! THE TAXI-TROG UNION STATES THAT NO TROG MAY BE...
TRIPLE FARE!
WELL, WHAT THE UNION DOESN'T KNOW WON'T HURT IT!
HE'S **KIDNAPPED** MY BABY SISTER, **STARFLAKE**.
IN THAT CASE, I'LL CHARGE YOU THE REGULAR FARE. WE **TROGS** ARE ONLY **HALF MACHINE**, AFTER ALL!
WHEN I WAS YOUNG I WANTED TO IMPRESS A GIRL SO I BECAME A STAR COUNTER!
THE GIRL WASN'T IMPRESSED SO I KEPT COUNTING STARS TO FORGET HER. NOW ALL I HAVE ARE THE STARS. I SHOULD HAVE COUNTED GIRLS.
HEY!!
LOOK IT'S A STAR COUNTER. THE POOR FELLOW MUST BE AWFULLY LONELY. LET'S STOP FOR A VISIT ON THE WAY BACK. OKAY?
I DOUBT IF YOU'LL BE COMING BACK FROM **ODDBALL!** ANYWAY THEY DON'T LIKE COMPANY!

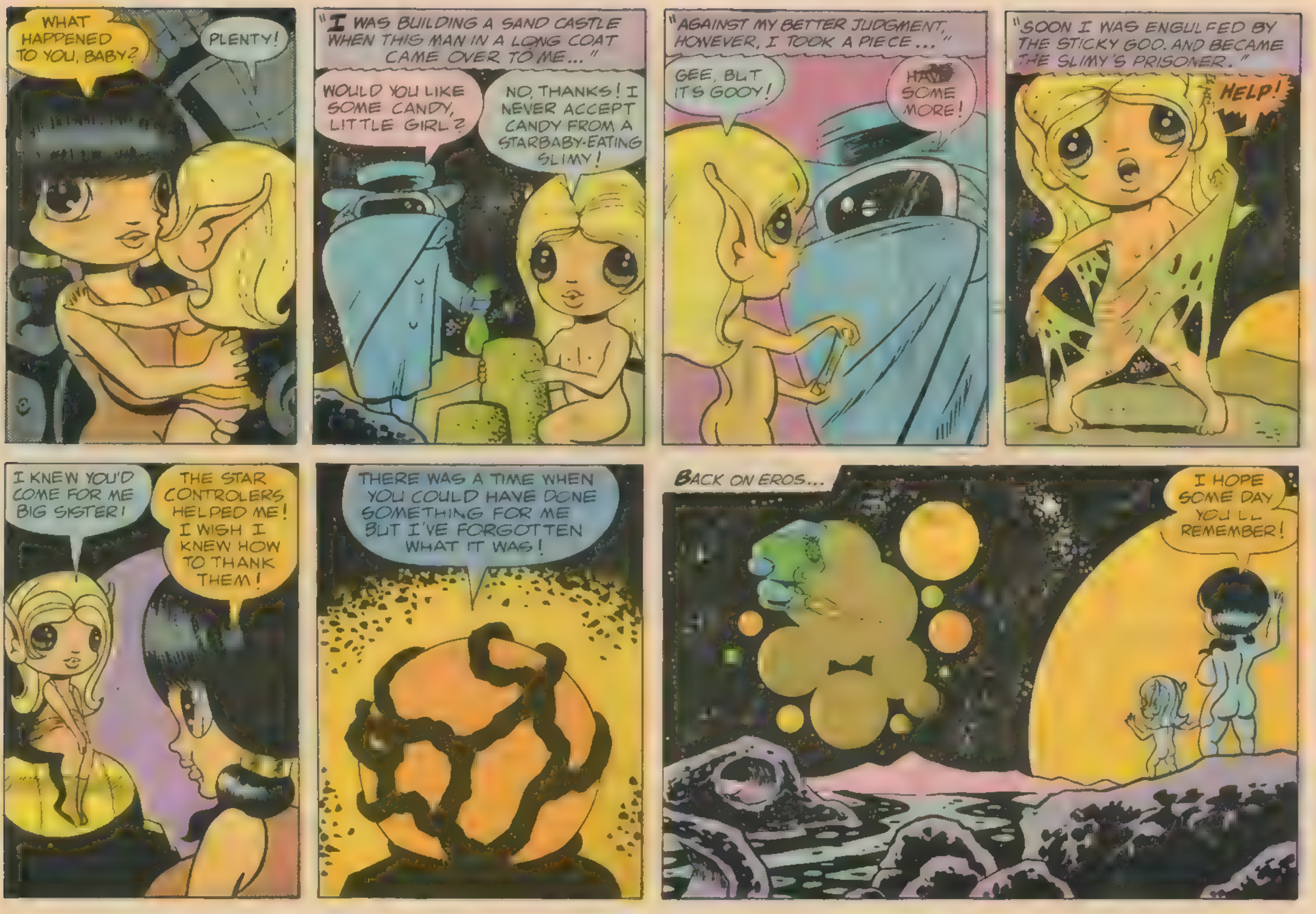

ODDBALL THE MAD COMPUTER!
TROGGIE, WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE **ODDBALL** WANTS TO DISECT **STARFLAKE**?
PERHAPS HE WANTS TO SEE HOW A SOFT MACHINE WORKS-- A MACHINE WITHOUT CHIPS!
WELL, TROGGIE, I GUESS THIS IS WHERE YOU LEAVE ME!
I'M AFRAID SO. [illegible] BATTERY [illegible] TROJAN [illegible]!
INSIDE THE COMPUTEROID..
--GASP!-- WHAT ARE YOU?
I'M A **BIT...**
√9=3. THAT'S ALL I'M SUPPOSED TO KNOW ..BUT I'VE GOT **AMBITION!** I LEARN THINGS BEYOND MY CAPACITY! THAT'S **FORBIDDEN** BUT I WANT TO BE A **BRAIN!** I ALREADY KNOW A LOT OF THINGS I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO KNOW-- LIKE WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU ARE HERE!
HAIR OR NAIL?
I SHOULDN'T TALK TO YOU. **ODDBALL** COULD HAVE ME CLIPPED! BUT IF YOU'LL TELL ME THINGS--I'LL BRING YOU TO YOUR SS... OH! NO! HERE COMES A **CLIPPER!**


RUN, MOONCHILD! WE BITS OF INFORMATION ARE EXPENDABLE BUT YOU'VE GOT A BRAIN! SAVE IT!
SNIP! SNIP!
OPPS! WAS THAT SNAP ME OR...
SNAP!
...UGH!... POOR BIT, AND NOW THE CLIPPER IS AFTER ME!
6N
WHAT I NEED IS A...
...GUN!
BUT HOW...? WELL, I'LL FIGURE THAT OUT LATER!
GOTCHA!
ZZITZ!
KA-BOOM!


I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM ODDBALL'S ASSASSINS! THIS WAY SHOULD BE...
SAAAAFE!
OH, JEEZ! THIS IS ODDBALL'S BRAIN-- BUT WHATS THAT PEAR DOING THERE?
PERHAPS THIS THING IS WHAT'S CAUSING ODDBALL SO MUCH TROUBLE! SURE, THAT'S WHAT'S DRIVING HIM MAD!
IF I GET... IT... UGH... OUT OF HIS BRAIN MAYBE HE'LL ...UNGH... LET MY SISTER GO!
THERE, THAT DOES IT! NOW EVERYTHING FROM HERE ON SHOULD BE ALRIGHT! UNLESS OF COURSE, I RUN INTO A STARBABY-EATING SLIMY!


HEY--YOU'RE A SLIMY!
CORRECT STARBABE I LURED YOU HERE TO RETRIEVE THE COSMIC PEARL FOR ME. ONLY A STARBABY COULD GET NEAR IT
YOUR BRAINWAVES ARE TOO SIMPLE TO BE CONSIDERED A THREAT TO ODDBALL! NOW I WILL TAKE WHAT I CAME FOR!
RIP!
WHERE IS SHE? WHERE IS MY SISTER?
THE PEARL IS PRICELESS! YOU MUST GIVE IT TO ME BEFORE THEY COME FOR IT. YOU MUST!
OKAY KID, NO MORE MR NICE GUY! PREPARE TO BE EAT... URP!!
THE TROOPS HAVE LANDED!

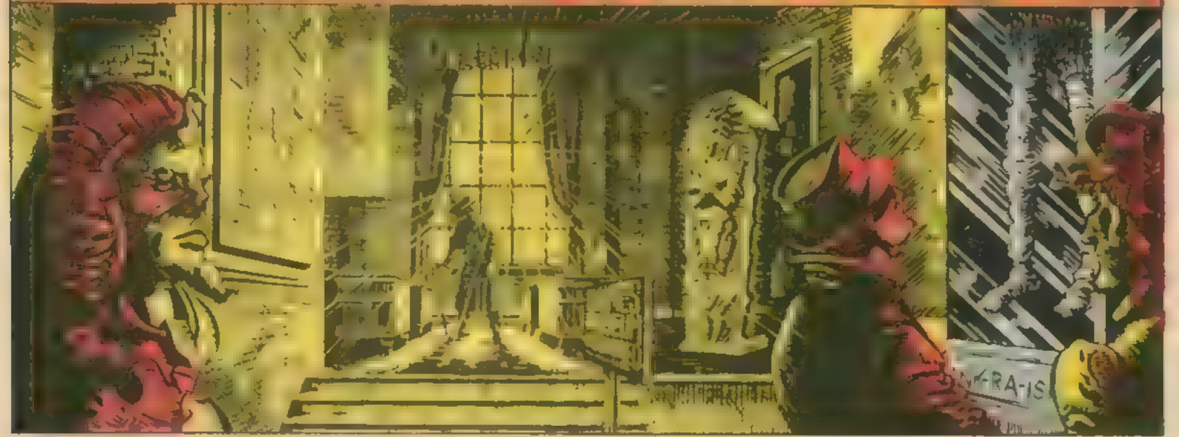

YOU HAVE SOMETHING OF OURS, MISS MOONCHILD!
STAR COUNTERS!...YOU'RE THE ONE I PASSED ON THE WAY AND I'LL BET THIS COSMIC PEARL BELONGS TO YOUR HEADLESS FRIEND, RIGHT?
LISTEN! MANY CALL US STAR COUNTERS BUT WE ARE ACTUALLY STAR CONTROLERS! WE KEEP THE STARS IN PLACE BY MEANS OF THE COSMIC PEARL, AND WHOEVER POSSESSES THAT PEARL HAS THE POWER TO DISRUPT THE UNIVERSE. UNLESS YOU HAVE AMBITIONS TOWARD BLACKMAIL, I SUGGEST THAT YOU RETURN OUR STOLEN PROPERTY--IMMEDIATELY! WE HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR IT FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS!
IN TWO MORE MINUTES, IT WILL BE YOURS AGAIN BUT I NEED IT UNTIL I CAN CHANGE!
YOU MAY TURN AROUND NOW!
BY THE WAY YOU HAVE YOUR COSMIC PEARL BACK! BUT I'M STILL MISSING A BABY SISTER. DOES ODDBALL HAVE HER?
NO, THE SLIMY HAD HER ALL ALONG!
DID YOU KNOW THAT WE CAN SEE IN ALL DIRECTIONS?
THE TRANSFER CRAFT IS READY!
WE FOUND YOUR SISTER ABOARD THE SLIMY'S SHIP AND BROUGHT HER TO OUR SHIP!
STARFLAKE!


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, BABY?
PLENTY!
"I WAS BUILDING A SAND CASTLE WHEN THIS MAN IN A LONG COAT CAME OVER TO ME..."
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME CANDY, LITTLE GIRL?
NO, THANKS! I NEVER ACCEPT CANDY FROM A STARBABY-EATING SLIMY!
"AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT, HOWEVER, I TOOK A PIECE..."
GEE, BUT IT'S GOOY!
HAVE SOME MORE!
"SOON I WAS ENGULFED BY THE STICKY GOO, AND BECAME THE SLIMY'S PRISONER."
HELP!
I KNEW YOU'D COME FOR ME BIG SISTER!
THE STAR CONTROLERS HELPED ME! I WISH I KNEW HOW TO THANK THEM!
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN YOU COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING FOR ME BUT I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT IT WAS!
BACK ON EROS...
I HOPE SOME DAY YOU'LL REMEMBER!

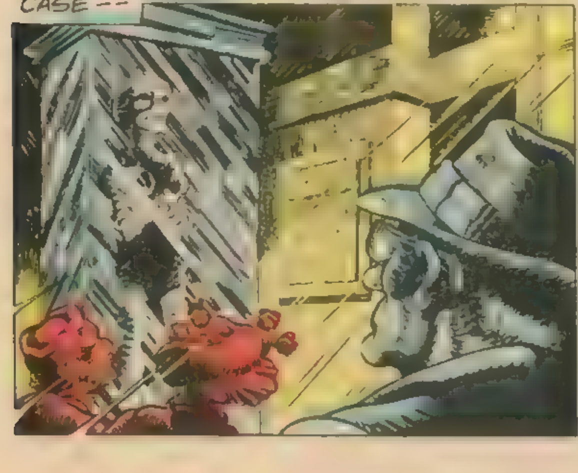
THE LIFE BATTERY

BY EANDO BINDER · ART/ LANDON CHESNEY · ADAPTATION/ BILL SPICER

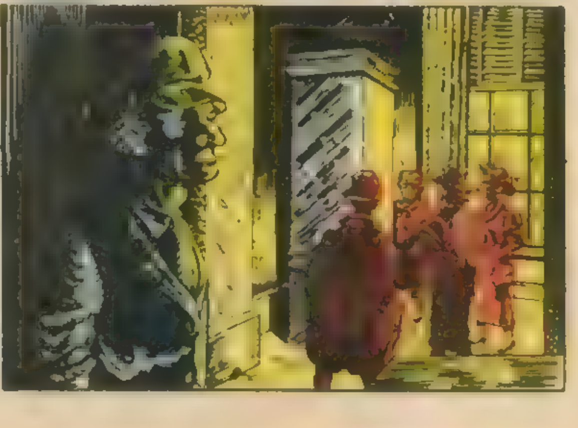
THE MUSEUM WAS QUIET. IT WAS ESPECIALLY QUIET IN THE EGYPTOLOGY ROOM WHERE NUMEROUS MUMMY CASES WERE ON DISPLAY. PEOPLE GENERALLY FEEL AWED IN THE PRESENCE OF ANTIQUITY AND THE SIGNS OF ANCIENT DEATH, AND THE FEW PERSONS WHO WERE IN THE ROOM THIS BRIGHT, SUNNY MORNING SPOKE IN WHISPERS, AS THOUGH FEARING TO WAKE THE LONG DEAD--



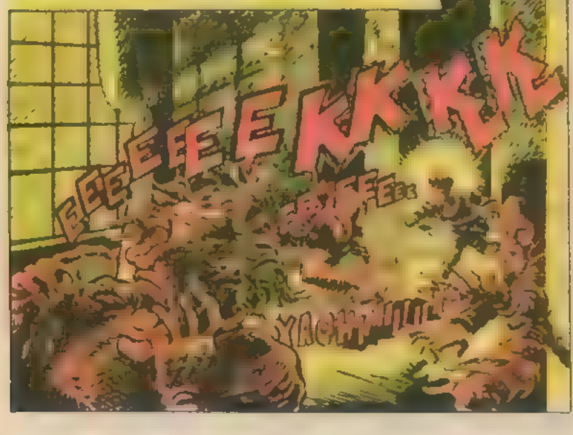
THEY WERE CLUSTERED ABOUT THE PRIZE EXHIBIT, THE GNARLED, MISSHAPEN NAKED-BROWN MUMMY OF ***ANK-RA-ISAR***, KING OF THE NINTH DYNASTY OF ANCIENT EGYPT, CLEARLY REVEALED IN AN UPRIGHT GLASS CASE--



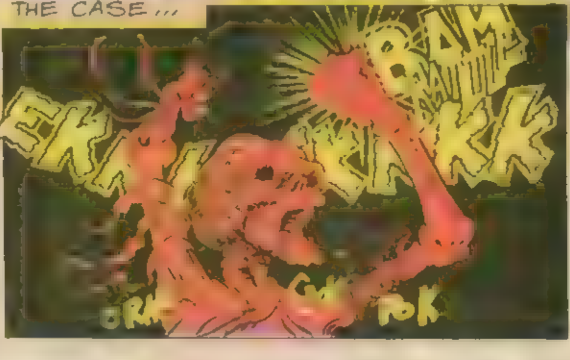
A UNIFORMED ATTENDENT AMUSED HIMSELF BY THINKING HOW AMAZED THE SPECTATORS WOULD BE IF THE MUMMY BLINKED ITS EYELESS SOCKETS AND CAME TO LIFE. BUT NO USE TO THINK OF THAT, HE TOLD HIMSELF, FOR SUCH A DOWNRIGHT, IMPOSSIBLE MIRACLE COULD NEVER HAPPEN!



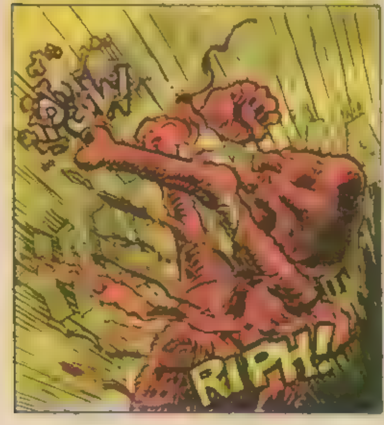
YET HAPPEN IT DID! AMONG THE SPECTATORS, TWO OLD MAIDS TURNED PALE, SHRIEKED, THEN BEGAN TO RUN. IT BECAME A STAMPEDE. STARTLED, THE GUARD RUSHED OVER TO SEE WHAT HAD OCCURRED TO FRIGHTEN THESE PEOPLE...



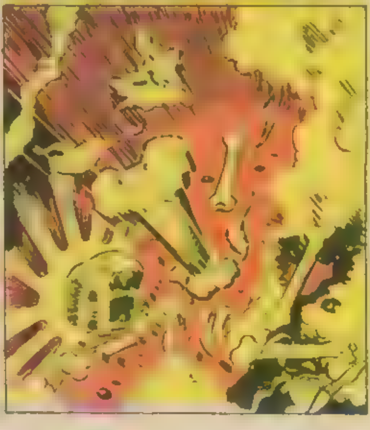
THE MUMMY, IN ITS GLASS CASE, WAS PERFORMING A SERIES OF INCREDIBLE MOVEMENTS -- ITS HINGED JAW WAGGLED UP AND DOWN -- ITS FOLDED ARMS UNBENT AND BEAT A TATTOO ON THE GLASS COVER, AS THOUGH IT WERE BEGGING TO GET OUT. ALL THESE MOTIONS WERE ACCOMPANIED BY A HORRIBLE, DRY RUSTLING SOUND THAT SEEPED OUT OF THE CASE...



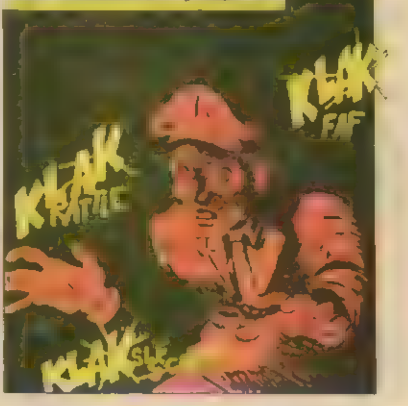
THE INEVITABLE HAPPENED. JOINTS AND LIGAMENTS THAT HAD BEEN RUSTED TOGETHER BY TIME BROKE APART. FRACTURES APPEARED, EXPOSING GAPING HOLES.



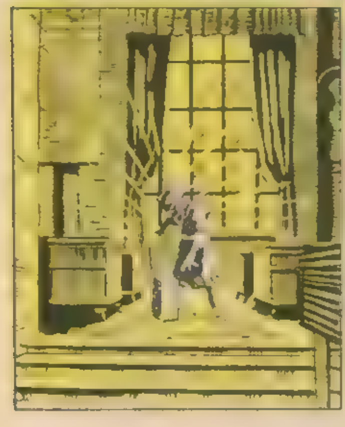
IN ANOTHER MOMENT THE MUMMY BECAME AN AMORPHOUS HEAP OF SHATTERED BITS THAT PILED UP IN THE LOWER PART OF THE GLASS CASE...

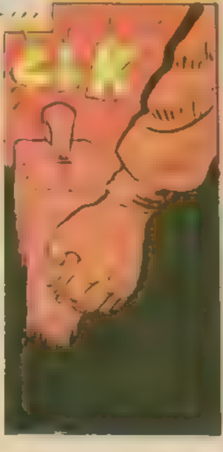


THE MUMMY OF ANK-RA-ISAR NOW WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A SMALL MASS OF DESSICATED DEBRIS THAT HEAVED AND TREMBLED WITH SOME ALIEN HORROR OF PSEJDO-LIFE...

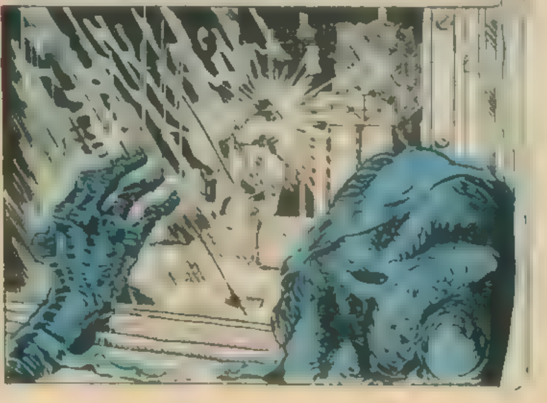


THE GUARD RAN TOO, YELLING BLOODY MURDER. PRESENTLY THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT IN THE ROOM BUT AN OLD, THIN MAN WITH A SQUARE BLACK CASE. HE STOOPED AND TWISTED A TINY KNOB AT THE SIDE OF THE CASE...

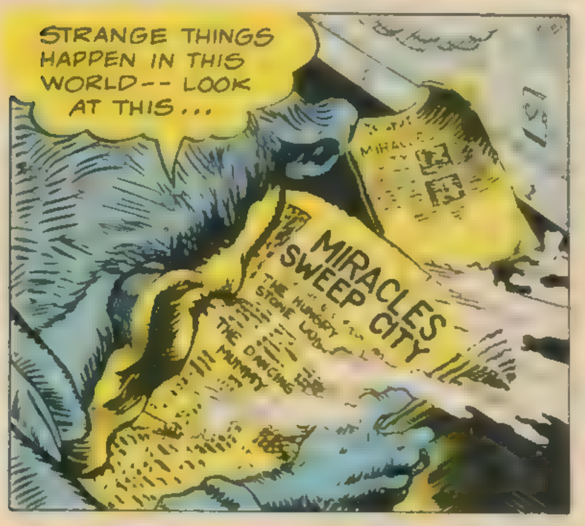




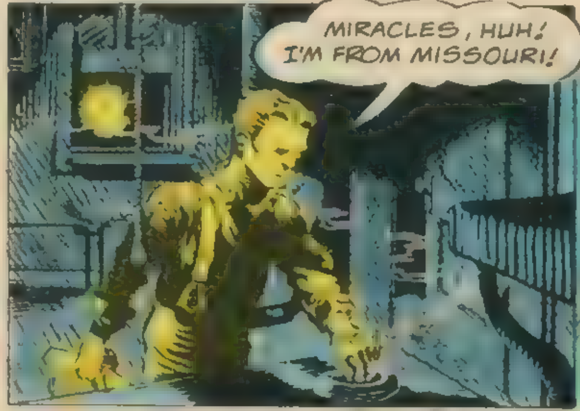
THE MUMMY SHARDS INSIDE THE GLASS CASE CEASED THEIR UNHOLY DANCE AND BECAME INANIMATE DEBRIS. SMILING STRANGELY TO HIMSELF, THE LITTLE OLD MAN SHUFFLED OUT OF THE ROOM, HIS RIGHT SIDE WEIGHTED DOWN WITH THE BLACK BAG...



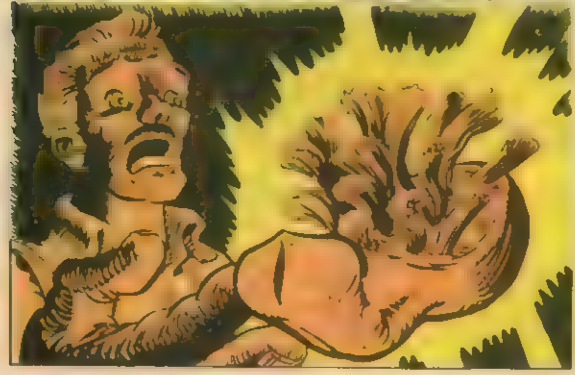
LEE HACKETT TURNED A PAGE OF HIS NEWSPAPER...


STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN IN THIS WORLD-- LOOK AT THIS...
MIRACLES SWEEP CITY

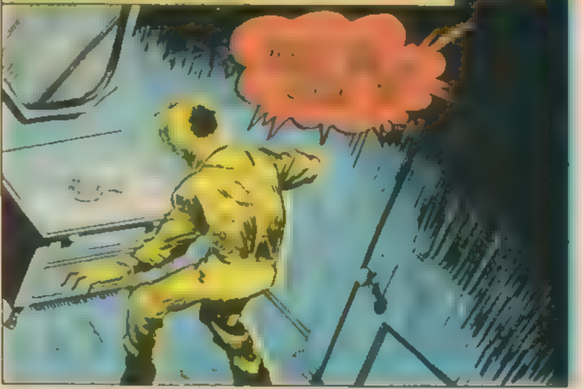
HE AROSE AND CROSSED THE ROOM TO HIS DRESSER, PUZZLING OVER THE ITEM. THEN HE SHRUGGED AND BEGAN WHISTLING TO HIMSELF. HE HAD A DATE THAT EVENING AND COULDN'T BOTHER WITH SO-CALLED MIRACLES...


MIRACLES, HUH! I'M FROM MISSOURI!

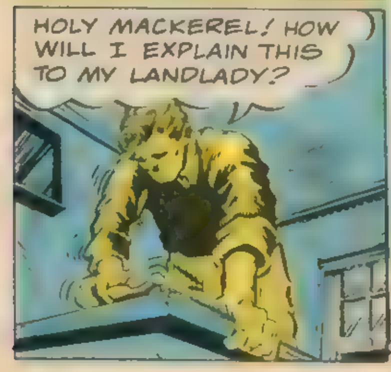
HACKETT TRIED TO SUBDUE HIS UNRULY HAIR WITH THE HAIRBRUSH. HIS GIRL LIKED IT SLICKED DOWN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. SUDDENLY, THE BRUSH SEEMED TO WRITHE IN HIS HAND. STARTLED, HE LOWERED IT IN FRONT OF HIS EYES. IT **WAS** MOVING! HACKETT DROPPED THE BRUSH, GASPING...

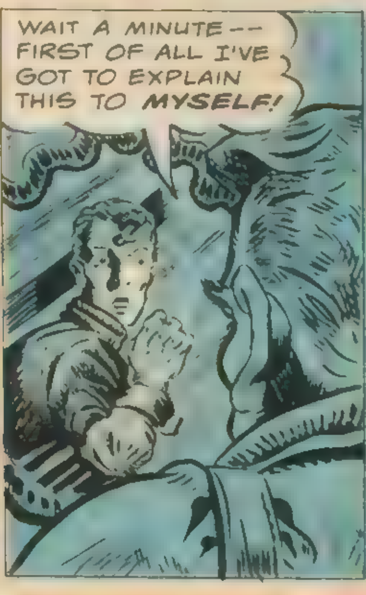


BEFORE HIS ASTONISHED EYES, IT BEGAN DIGGING INTO THE WOOD IT LAY UPON. IN A SHORT TIME THE EDGES OF THE BRUSH HAD MERGED INTO THE SURFACE OF THE DRESSER TOP. THEN SUDDENLY IT WAS OVER AND THE BRUSH LAY ONCE MORE QUIESCENT...

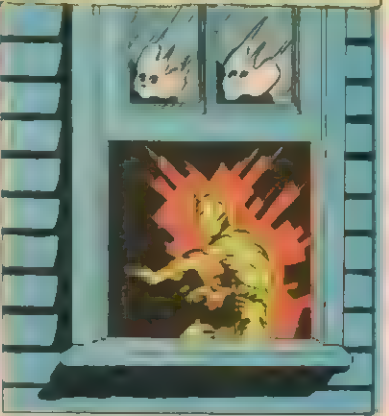


LEE HACKETT WAS NOT THE SORT TO BECOME PANICKY. INSTEAD, HE REACHED GINGERLY FOR THE HANDLE AND ATTEMPTED TO PICK UP THE BRUSH. IT WAS ROOTED FAST TO THE DRESSER TOP...

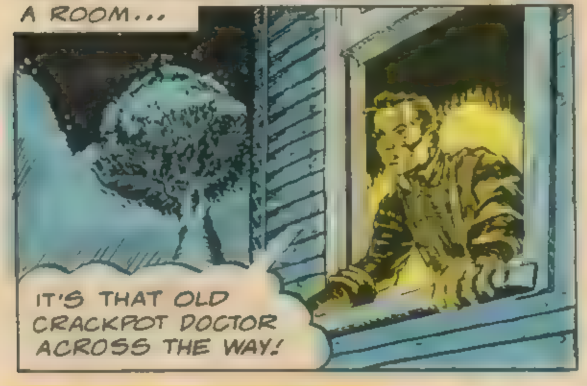

HOLY MACKEREL! HOW WILL I EXPLAIN THIS TO MY LANDLADY?


WAIT A MINUTE-- FIRST OF ALL I'VE GOT TO EXPLAIN THIS TO *MYSELF!*

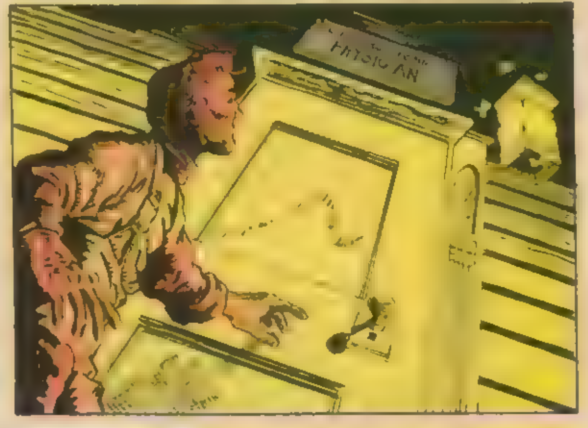
HACKETT RATIONALIZED. HE CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT AN OUTSIDE AGENCY MUST HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE. THE OPEN WINDOW WAS THE ONLY POSSIBILITY...



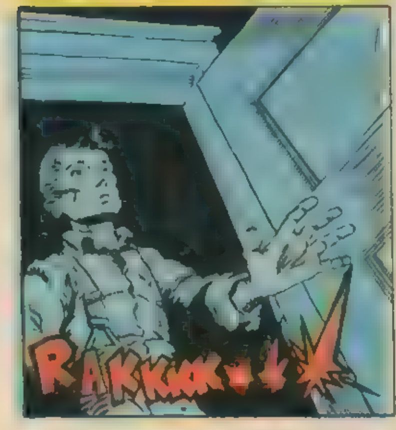
SUDDENLY HE REMEMBERED THAT JUST AS THE HAIRBRUSH HAD BEGUN ACTING UP, HE HAD GLIMPSED A BRIGHT FLASH FROM THE CORNER OF HIS EYE. HE STUCK HIS HEAD OUT THE WINDOW AND LOOKED ACROSS THE NARROW COURTYARD. HE SAW THE FLASH AGAIN. A THIN FACE WITHDREW INTO THE SHADOWS OF A ROOM...


IT'S THAT OLD CRACKPOT DOCTOR ACROSS THE WAY!

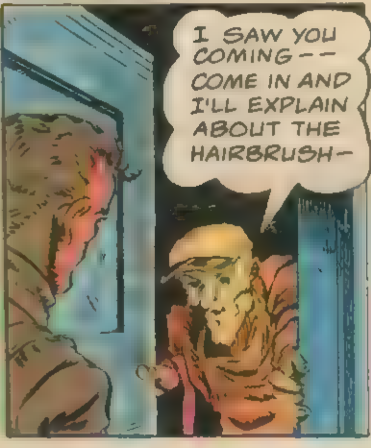
WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, HE LEFT HIS ROOM, WENT DOWNSTAIRS, CROSSED THE COURTYARD AND TRIED THE DOOR OF THE RAMSHACKLE OLD FRAME HOUSE. JUST OVER THE DOOR, A WEATHER-BEATEN OLD SIGN DISPLAYED ITS FADED GILT LETTERING...



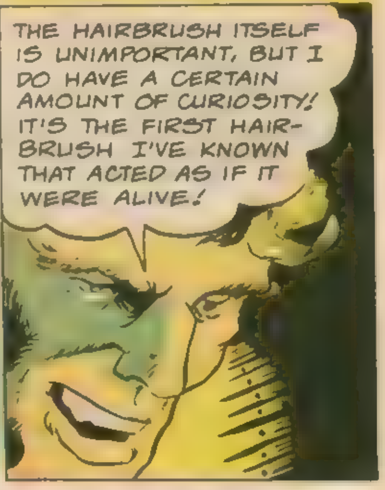
THE DOOR WAS LOCKED. JUST AS HACKETT WAS ABOUT TO KNOCK A BOLT GRATED AND THE DOOR SWUNG INWARD ON SQUEAKING HINGES...



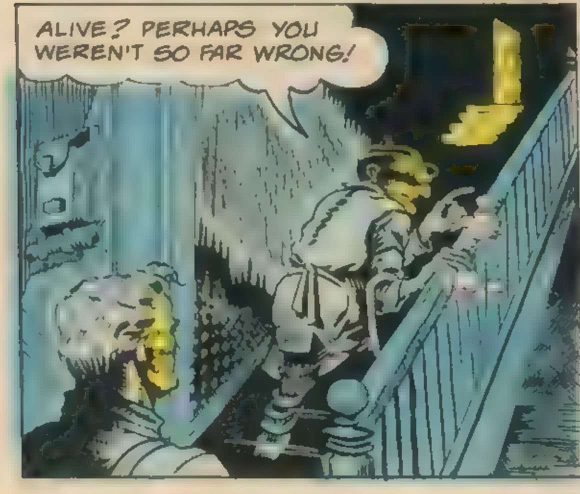
DR. HENRY WAS SHORT AND THIN, UNHEALTHY OF COMPLEXION, SUNKEN CHESTED. THERE WAS A SATURNINE GRIN ON HIS THIN LIPS...


I SAW YOU COMING -- COME IN AND I'LL EXPLAIN ABOUT THE HAIRBRUSH-

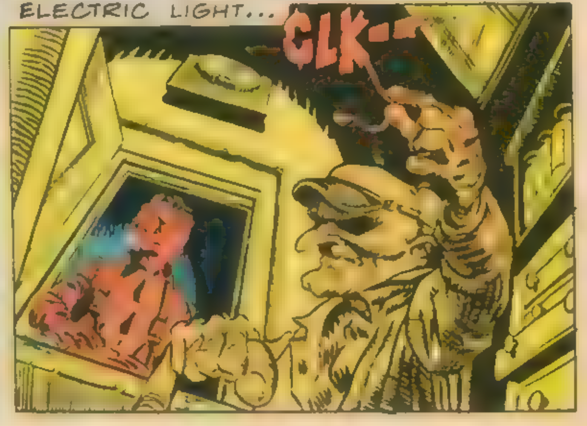
HACKETT'S ANGER WAS EVAPORATING. HE INTRODUCED HIMSELF...

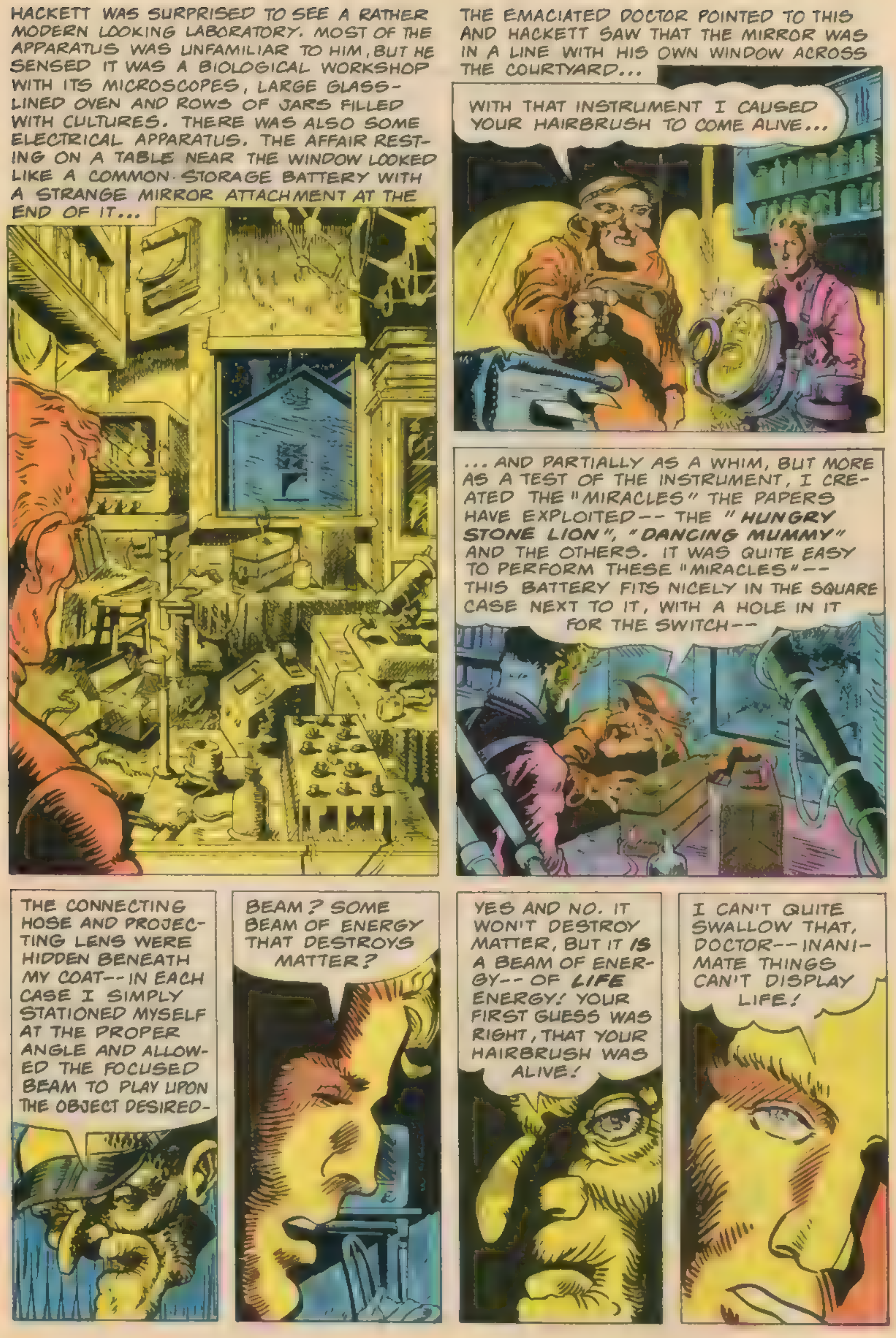

THE HAIRBRUSH ITSELF IS UNIMPORTANT, BUT I DO HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CURIOSITY! IT'S THE FIRST HAIRBRUSH I'VE KNOWN THAT ACTED AS IF IT WERE ALIVE!

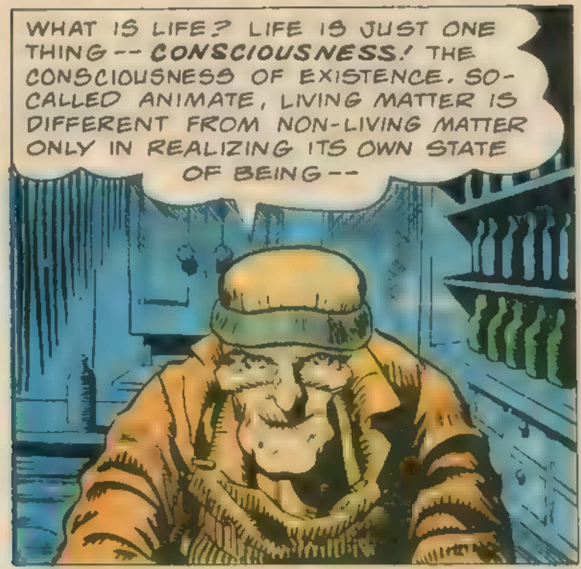
DR. HENRY LAUGHED SHORTLY AND LED THE WAY UP A WINDING STAIRCASE WHOSE BANNISTER WAS THICK WITH DUST-

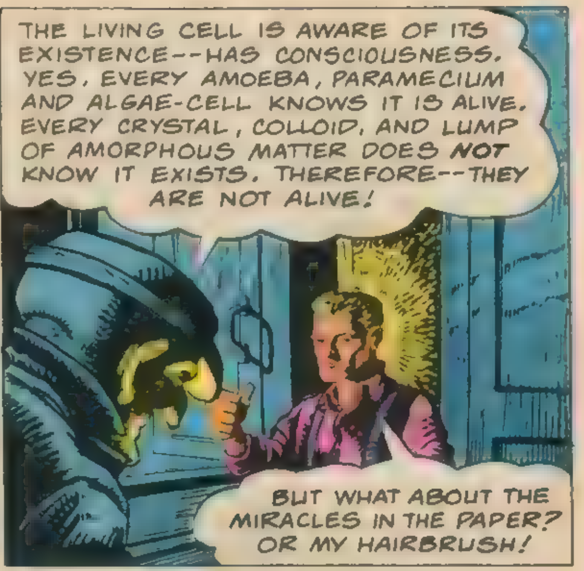

ALIVE? PERHAPS YOU WEREN'T SO FAR WRONG!

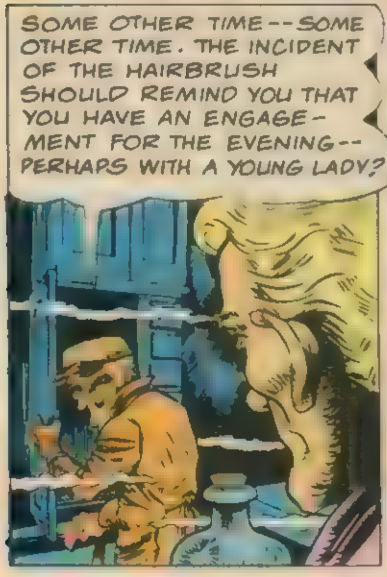
ON THE SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY TWO DOORS WERE OPEN. FROM ONE CAME THE TWITTERING OF LITTLE ANIMALS--GUINEA PIGS. AT THE SECOND DOOR THE OLD DOCTOR STOPPED, MOTIONED HACKETT INSIDE -- THE DOCTOR SNAPPED ON AN ELECTRIC LIGHT...

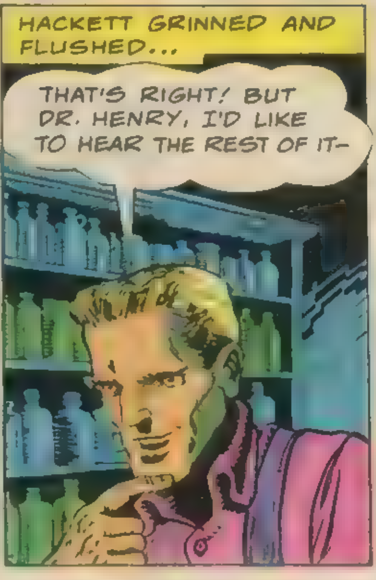


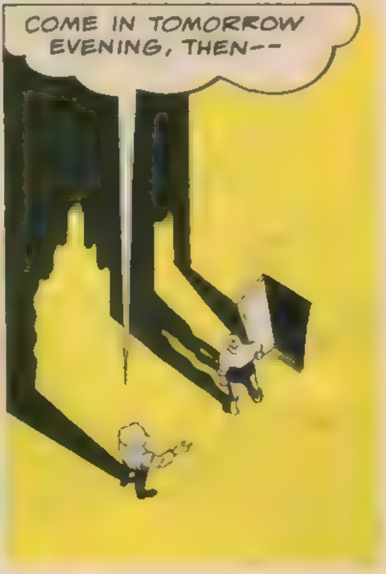

HACKETT WAS SURPRISED TO SEE A RATHER MODERN LOOKING LABORATORY. MOST OF THE APPARATUS WAS UNFAMILIAR TO HIM, BUT HE SENSED IT WAS A BIOLOGICAL WORKSHOP WITH ITS MICROSCOPES, LARGE GLASS-LINED OVEN AND ROWS OF JARS FILLED WITH CULTURES. THERE WAS ALSO SOME ELECTRICAL APPARATUS. THE AFFAIR RESTING ON A TABLE NEAR THE WINDOW LOOKED LIKE A COMMON STORAGE BATTERY WITH A STRANGE MIRROR ATTACHMENT AT THE END OF IT...
THE EMACIATED DOCTOR POINTED TO THIS AND HACKETT SAW THAT THE MIRROR WAS IN A LINE WITH HIS OWN WINDOW ACROSS THE COURTYARD...
WITH THAT INSTRUMENT I CAUSED YOUR HAIRBRUSH TO COME ALIVE...
...AND PARTIALLY AS A WHIM, BUT MORE AS A TEST OF THE INSTRUMENT, I CREATED THE "MIRACLES" THE PAPERS HAVE EXPLOITED -- THE "**HUNGRY STONE LION**", "**DANCING MUMMY**" AND THE OTHERS. IT WAS QUITE EASY TO PERFORM THESE "MIRACLES" -- THIS BATTERY FITS NICELY IN THE SQUARE CASE NEXT TO IT, WITH A HOLE IN IT FOR THE SWITCH --
THE CONNECTING HOSE AND PROJECTING LENS WERE HIDDEN BENEATH MY COAT -- IN EACH CASE I SIMPLY STATIONED MYSELF AT THE PROPER ANGLE AND ALLOWED THE FOCUSED BEAM TO PLAY UPON THE OBJECT DESIRED-
BEAM? SOME BEAM OF ENERGY THAT DESTROYS MATTER?
YES AND NO. IT WON'T DESTROY MATTER, BUT IT *IS* A BEAM OF ENERGY -- OF ***LIFE*** ENERGY! YOUR FIRST GUESS WAS RIGHT, THAT YOUR HAIRBRUSH WAS ALIVE!
I CAN'T QUITE SWALLOW THAT, DOCTOR -- INANIMATE THINGS CAN'T DISPLAY LIFE!


WHAT IS LIFE? LIFE IS JUST ONE THING -- **CONSCIOUSNESS!** THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF EXISTENCE. SO-CALLED ANIMATE, LIVING MATTER IS DIFFERENT FROM NON-LIVING MATTER ONLY IN REALIZING ITS OWN STATE OF BEING --

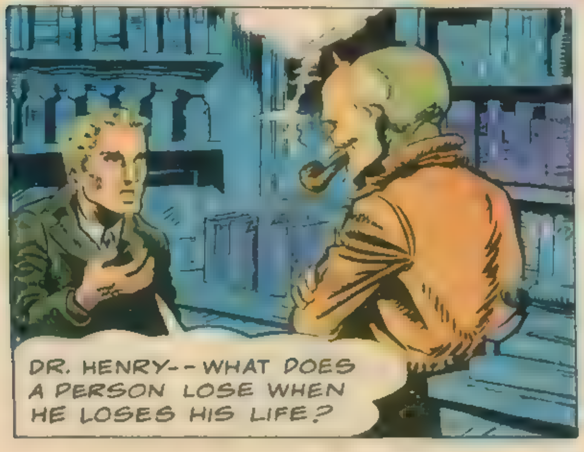

THE LIVING CELL IS AWARE OF ITS EXISTENCE--HAS CONSCIOUSNESS. YES, EVERY AMOEBA, PARAMECIUM AND ALGAE-CELL KNOWS IT IS ALIVE. EVERY CRYSTAL, COLLOID, AND LUMP OF AMORPHOUS MATTER DOES ***NOT*** KNOW IT EXISTS. THEREFORE--THEY ARE NOT ALIVE!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MIRACLES IN THE PAPER? OR MY HAIRBRUSH!

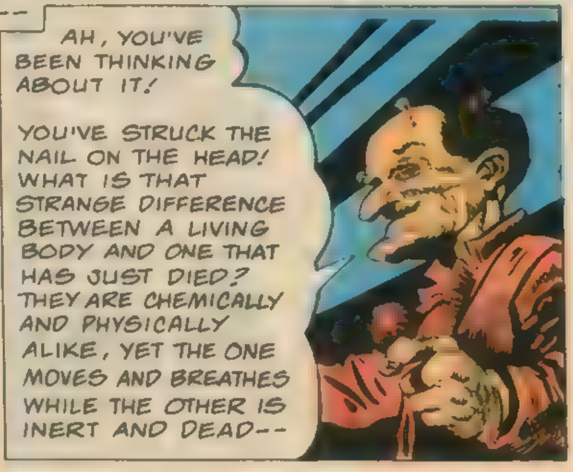

SOME OTHER TIME -- SOME OTHER TIME. THE INCIDENT OF THE HAIRBRUSH SHOULD REMIND YOU THAT YOU HAVE AN ENGAGEMENT FOR THE EVENING -- PERHAPS WITH A YOUNG LADY?

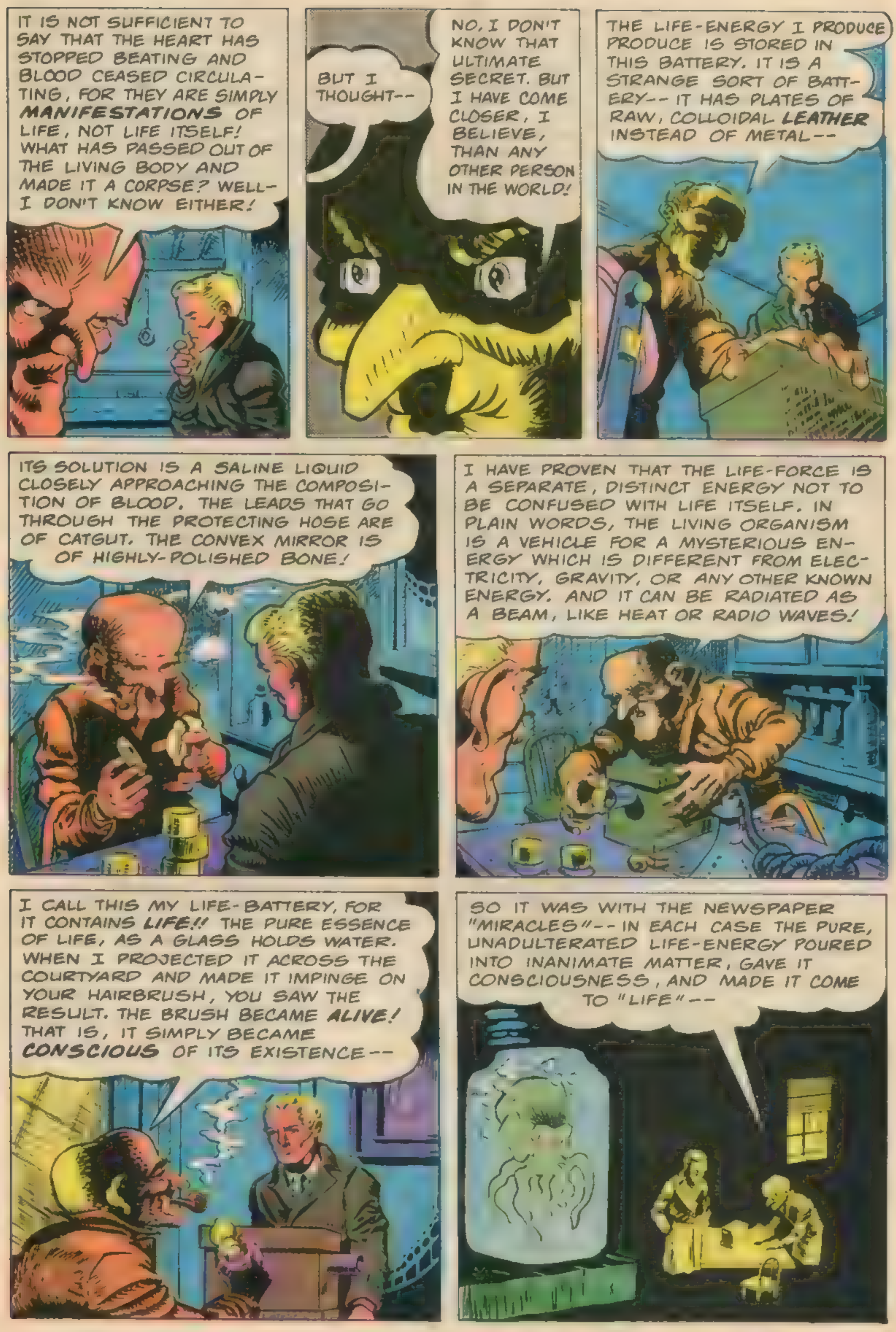

HACKETT GRINNED AND FLUSHED...
THAT'S RIGHT! BUT DR. HENRY, I'D LIKE TO HEAR THE REST OF IT-

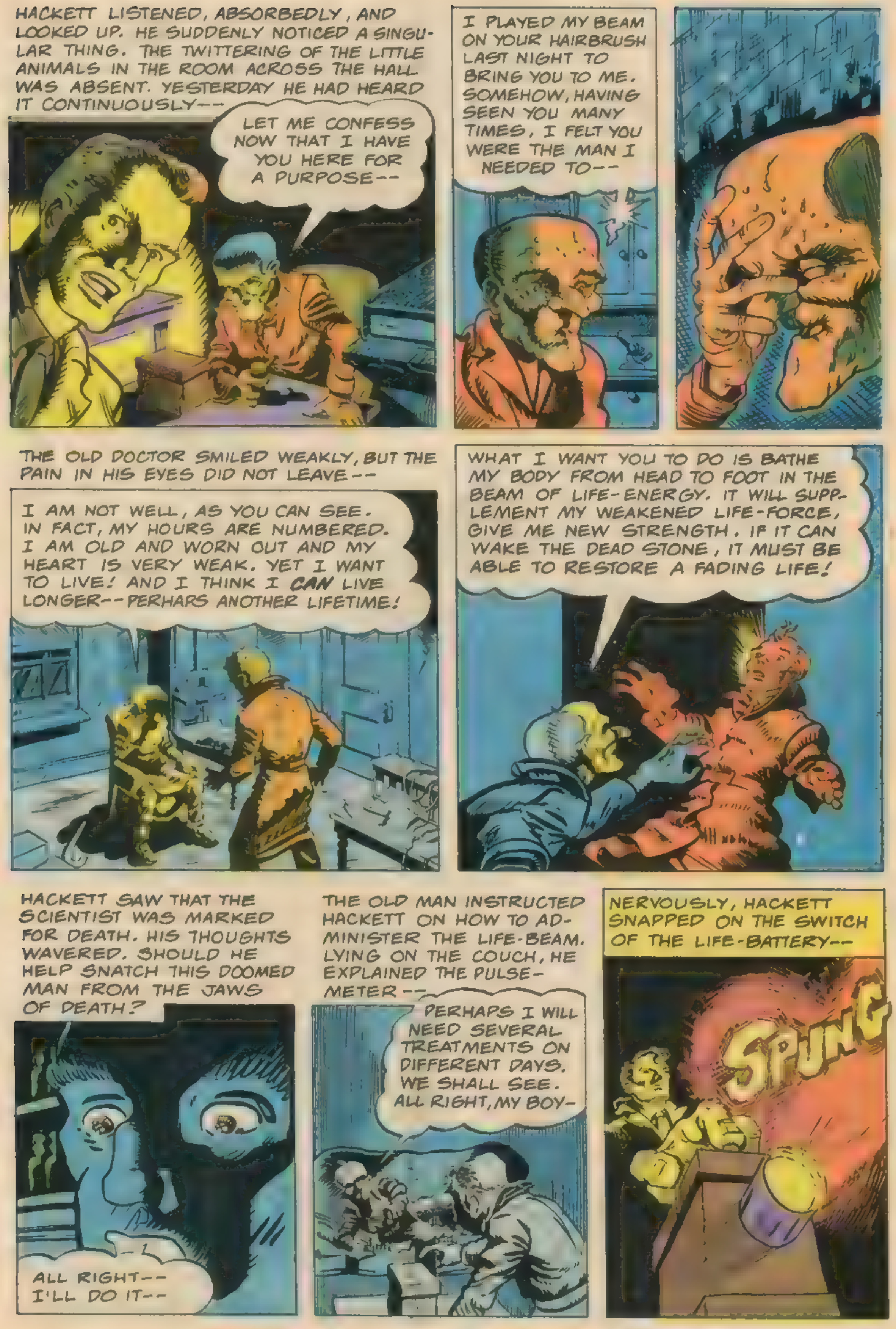

COME IN TOMORROW EVENING, THEN--

HACKETT SPENT THE NIGHT LISTLESSLY, THOUGHTFUL. BUT THE NEXT EVENING FOUND HIM EAGERLY CLIMBING THE STAIRS THAT LED TO DR. HENRY'S SECOND-STORY WORKSHOP. WHEN HE WAS FINALLY SEATED, HACKETT NOTICED THAT THE OLD DOCTOR WAS HIGHLY GRATIFIED THAT HE HAD COME. THEN HE ASKED THE QUESTION THAT HAD BEEN MULLING IN HIS HEAD ALL DAY--

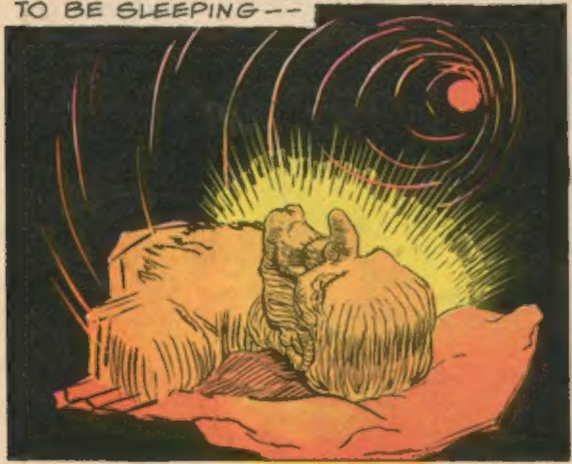

DR. HENRY--WHAT DOES A PERSON LOSE WHEN HE LOSES HIS LIFE?


AH, YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT!
YOU'VE STRUCK THE NAIL ON THE HEAD! WHAT IS THAT STRANGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LIVING BODY AND ONE THAT HAS JUST DIED? THEY ARE CHEMICALLY AND PHYSICALLY ALIKE, YET THE ONE MOVES AND BREATHES WHILE THE OTHER IS INERT AND DEAD--

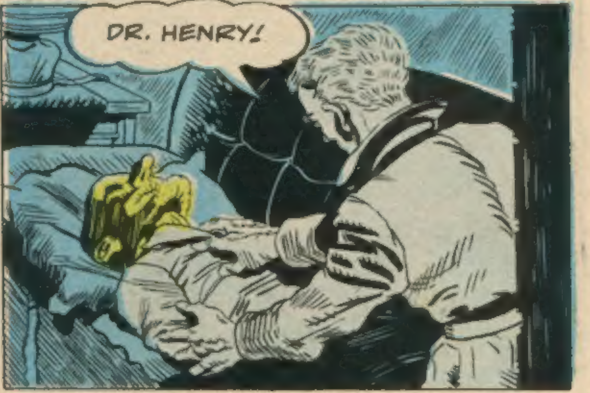

IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO SAY THAT THE HEART HAS STOPPED BEATING AND BLOOD CEASED CIRCULATING, FOR THEY ARE SIMPLY **MANIFESTATIONS** OF LIFE, NOT LIFE ITSELF! WHAT HAS PASSED OUT OF THE LIVING BODY AND MADE IT A CORPSE? WELL-- I DON'T KNOW EITHER!
BUT I THOUGHT--
NO, I DON'T KNOW THAT ULTIMATE SECRET. BUT I HAVE COME CLOSER, I BELIEVE, THAN ANY OTHER PERSON IN THE WORLD!
THE LIFE-ENERGY I PRODUCE PRODUCE IS STORED IN THIS BATTERY. IT IS A STRANGE SORT OF BATTERY-- IT HAS PLATES OF RAW, COLLOIDAL **LEATHER** INSTEAD OF METAL--
ITS SOLUTION IS A SALINE LIQUID CLOSELY APPROACHING THE COMPOSITION OF BLOOD. THE LEADS THAT GO THROUGH THE PROTECTING HOSE ARE OF CATGUT. THE CONVEX MIRROR IS OF HIGHLY-POLISHED BONE!
I HAVE PROVEN THAT THE LIFE-FORCE IS A SEPARATE, DISTINCT ENERGY NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH LIFE ITSELF. IN PLAIN WORDS, THE LIVING ORGANISM IS A VEHICLE FOR A MYSTERIOUS ENERGY WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM ELECTRICITY, GRAVITY, OR ANY OTHER KNOWN ENERGY. AND IT CAN BE RADIATED AS A BEAM, LIKE HEAT OR RADIO WAVES!
I CALL THIS MY LIFE-BATTERY, FOR IT CONTAINS ***LIFE!!*** THE PURE ESSENCE OF LIFE, AS A GLASS HOLDS WATER. WHEN I PROJECTED IT ACROSS THE COURTYARD AND MADE IT IMPINGE ON YOUR HAIRBRUSH, YOU SAW THE RESULT. THE BRUSH BECAME ***ALIVE!*** THAT IS, IT SIMPLY BECAME **CONSCIOUS** OF ITS EXISTENCE--
SO IT WAS WITH THE NEWSPAPER "MIRACLES"-- IN EACH CASE THE PURE, UNADULTERATED LIFE-ENERGY POURED INTO INANIMATE MATTER, GAVE IT CONSCIOUSNESS, AND MADE IT COME TO "LIFE"--


HACKETT LISTENED, ABSORBEDLY, AND LOOKED UP. HE SUDDENLY NOTICED A SINGULAR THING. THE TWITTERING OF THE LITTLE ANIMALS IN THE ROOM ACROSS THE HALL WAS ABSENT. YESTERDAY HE HAD HEARD IT CONTINUOUSLY--
LET ME CONFESS NOW THAT I HAVE YOU HERE FOR A PURPOSE--
I PLAYED MY BEAM ON YOUR HAIRBRUSH LAST NIGHT TO BRING YOU TO ME. SOMEHOW, HAVING SEEN YOU MANY TIMES, I FELT YOU WERE THE MAN I NEEDED TO--
THE OLD DOCTOR SMILED WEAKLY, BUT THE PAIN IN HIS EYES DID NOT LEAVE--
I AM NOT WELL, AS YOU CAN SEE. IN FACT, MY HOURS ARE NUMBERED. I AM OLD AND WORN OUT AND MY HEART IS VERY WEAK. YET I WANT TO LIVE! AND I THINK I CAN LIVE LONGER--PERHAPS ANOTHER LIFETIME!
WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO IS BATHE MY BODY FROM HEAD TO FOOT IN THE BEAM OF LIFE-ENERGY. IT WILL SUPPLEMENT MY WEAKENED LIFE-FORCE, GIVE ME NEW STRENGTH. IF IT CAN WAKE THE DEAD STONE, IT MUST BE ABLE TO RESTORE A FADING LIFE!
HACKETT SAW THAT THE SCIENTIST WAS MARKED FOR DEATH. HIS THOUGHTS WAVERED. SHOULD HE HELP SNATCH THIS DOOMED MAN FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH?
ALL RIGHT-- I'LL DO IT--
THE OLD MAN INSTRUCTED HACKETT ON HOW TO ADMINISTER THE LIFE-BEAM. LYING ON THE COUCH, HE EXPLAINED THE PULSE-METER--
PERHAPS I WILL NEED SEVERAL TREATMENTS ON DIFFERENT DAYS. WE SHALL SEE. ALL RIGHT, MY BOY-
NERVOUSLY, HACKETT SNAPPED ON THE SWITCH OF THE LIFE-BATTERY--
SPUNG

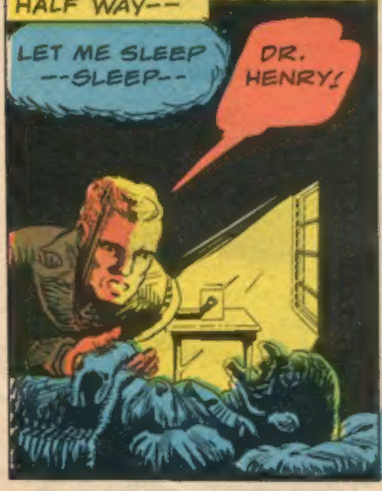
DR. HENRY RELAXED WITH A DEEP SIGH, CLOSING HIS EYES. HIS BREATHING BECAME REGULAR AND A FAINT SMILE TOUCHED HIS PALLID LIPS. HE SEEMED TO BE SLEEPING--



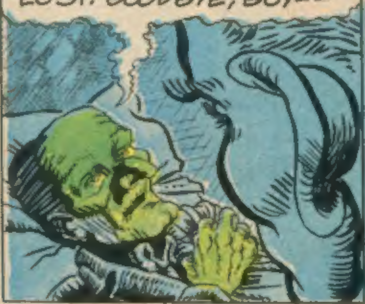
FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER HACKETT BECAME ALARMED. THE PULSE-METER KEPT GOING DOWN! IT REACHED THE NORMAL OF SEVENTY AND LOWERED STILL MORE. WHEN IT DROPPED BELOW SIXTY, HACKETT SNAPPED OFF THE LIFE-BATTERY AND TRIED TO WAKEN THE OLD MAN--



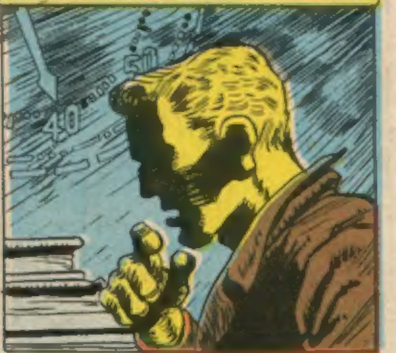
THE PULSE-METER READ FIFTY. AT LAST THE EYELIDS FLUTTERED AND OPENED HALF WAY--



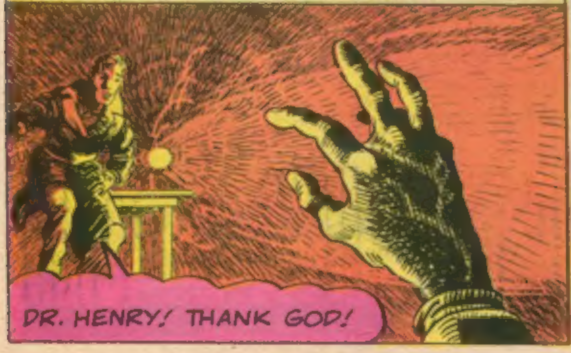
--NO-- CANNOT WAKE UP. I WILL GO TO SLEEP -- FOREVER. I DECEIVED YOU-- DID NOT TELL YOU THAT SOME OF THE GUINEA PIGS I TREATED -- DID NOT RECOVER. BUT DON'T BLAME YOURSELF. I WAS WILLING TO TAKE THE CHANCE. I HAVE LOST. GOODBYE, BOY--



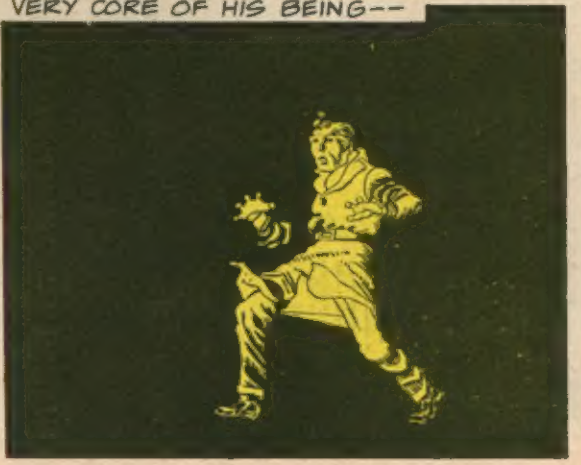
HACKETT SAW THE PULSE-METER DROP TO FORTY AND THEN DIVE DOWNWARD. DR. HENRY GAVE ONE CONVULSIVE SHUDDER AND THEN HIS BODY LAY STILL. HIS WASTED, TORTURED BODY HAD FOUND PEACE AT LAST-



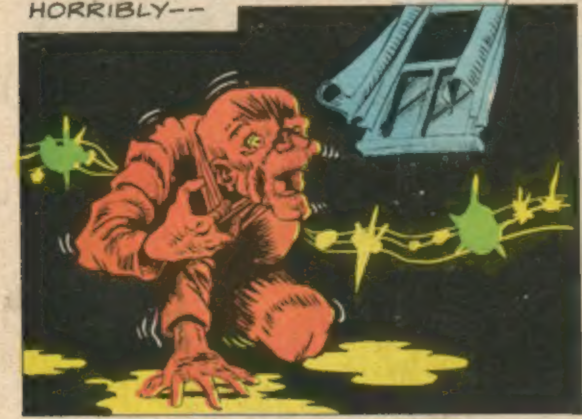
HOW LONG HACKETT STOOD THERE HE NEVER KNEW. NOR DID HE KNOW BY WHAT PROCESS OF REASONING OR MADNESS HE CAME TO DO WHAT HE THEN DID. HE ONLY KNEW THAT HE BEGAN PLAYING THE LIFE-BEAM OVER THE CORPSE. IT HAD BROUGHT OTHER THINGS--DEAD THINGS-- TO LIFE. WHY NOT DR. HENRY'S DEAD BODY?


DR. HENRY! THANK GOD!

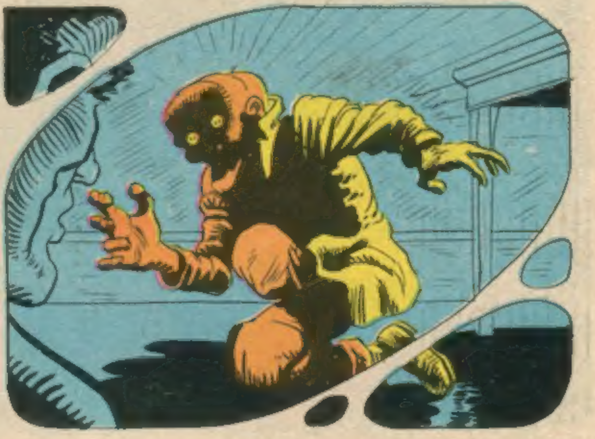
THUS HE CRIED OUT AS THE FIRST SIGNS OF LIFE AGAIN CAME TO THE CORPSE. BUT HE CHOKED ON THE WORDS AND STAGGERED BACK, SHOCKED TO THE VERY CORE OF HIS BEING--



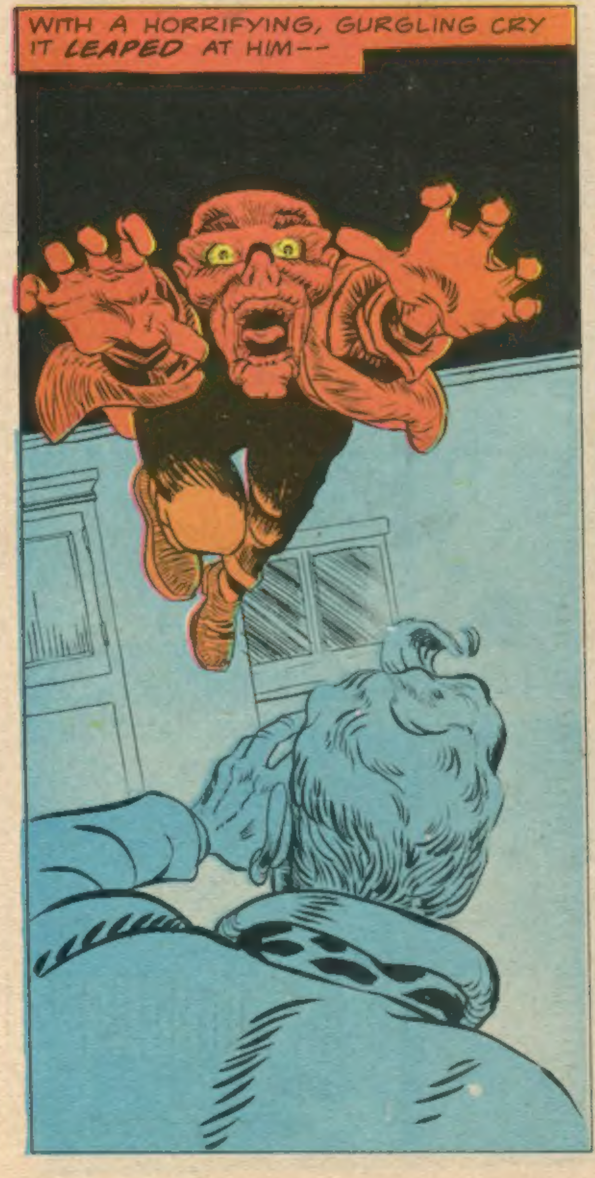
THE FIGURE THAT SLOWLY SAT UP AND OPENED ITS EYES WAS NOT DR. HENRY-- IT WAS SOME MONSTER, SOME ALIEN LIFE INHABITING THE BODY THAT HAD BEEN DR. HENRY'S. THE FACE WAS IDIOTIC, DROOLING-- THE BODY WRITHED HORRIBLY--



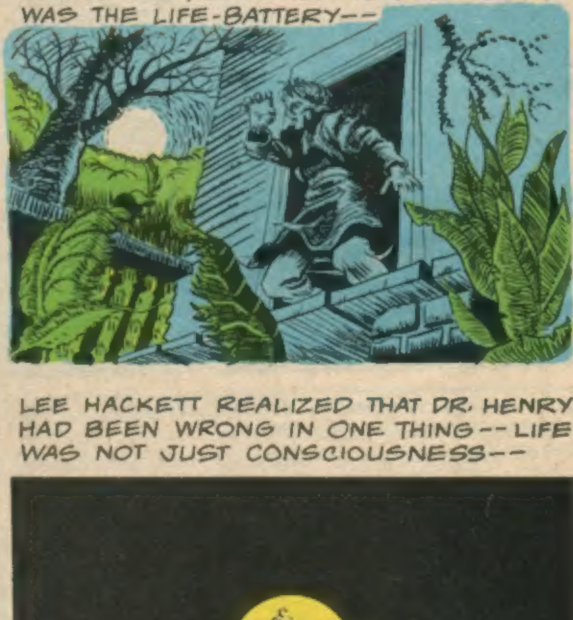
SUDDENLY IT SPRANG UP, TWISTING MADLY AROUND. A HORRIBLE TRAVESTY OF HUMAN LIFE, IT BEGAN SNIFFING AS THOUGH LOOKING FOR FOOD. ITS MAD EYES CAUGHT THE FIGURE OF HACKETT--



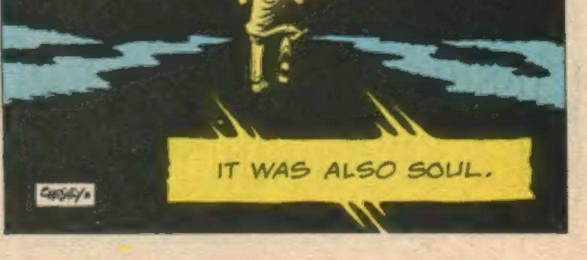
WITH A HORRIFYING, GURGLING CRY IT *LEAPED* AT HIM--



AN HOUR LATER LEE HACKETT REELED OUT OF THE OLD HOUSE, SICK TO THE BOTTOM OF HIS SOUL. BACK THERE IN THE DARK LABORATORY HE HAD LEFT A SHAPELESS BROKEN THING ON THE FLOOR. A TWICE-DEAD THING THAT HAD ONCE BEEN THE BODY OF DR. HENRY. BESIDE HIM, SMASHED TO SPLINTERS, WAS THE LIFE-BATTERY--

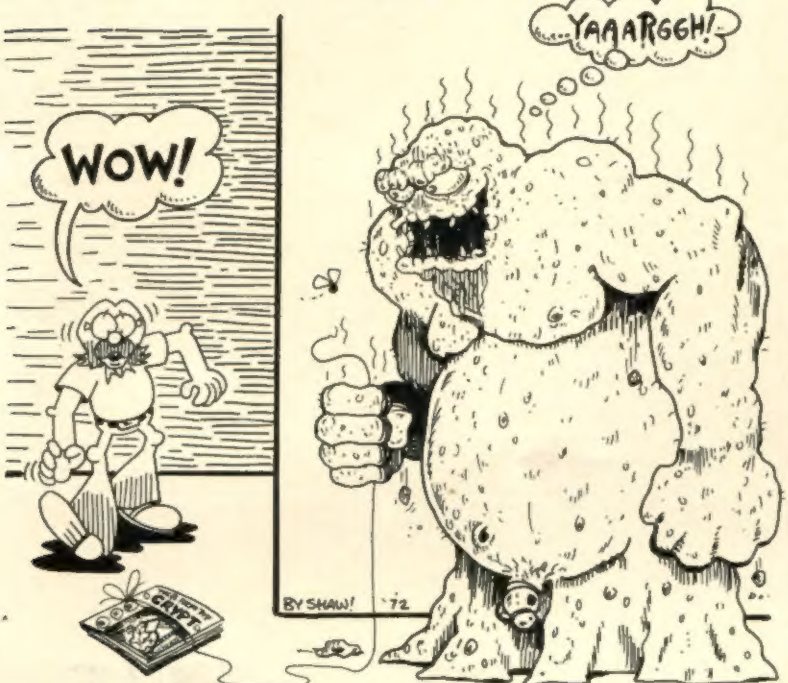


LEE HACKETT REALIZED THAT DR. HENRY HAD BEEN WRONG IN ONE THING-- LIFE WAS NOT JUST CONSCIOUSNESS--



IT WAS ALSO SOUL.

LOOKING FOR A COMIC?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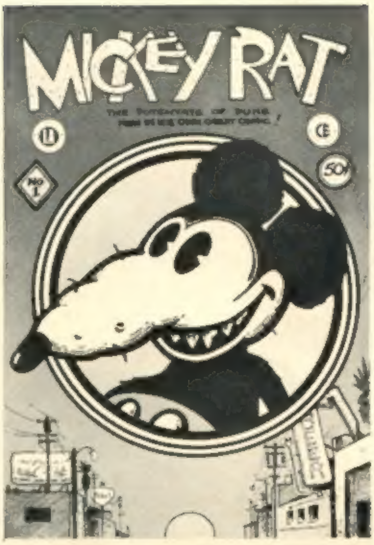
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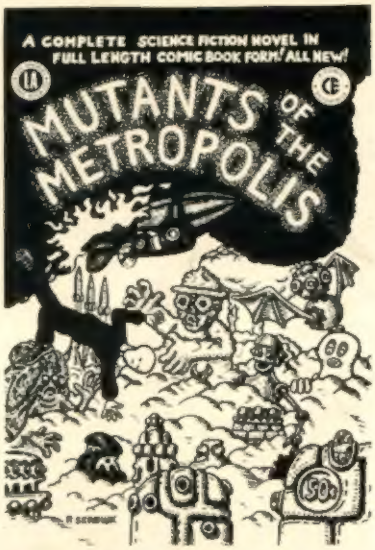
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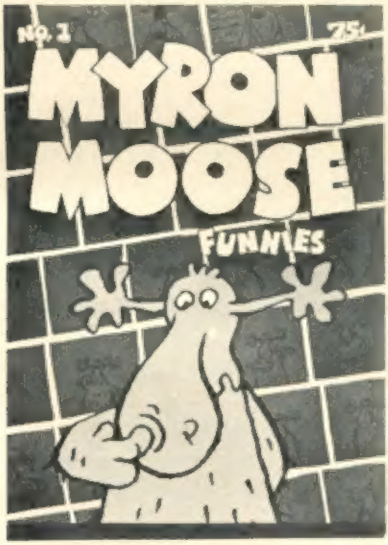
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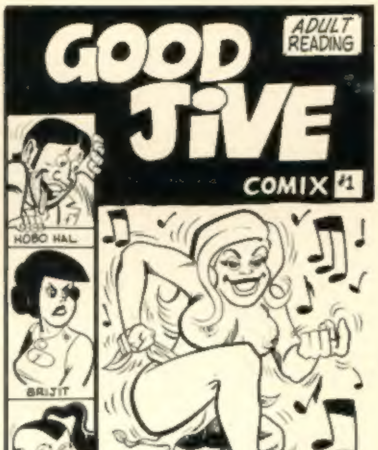
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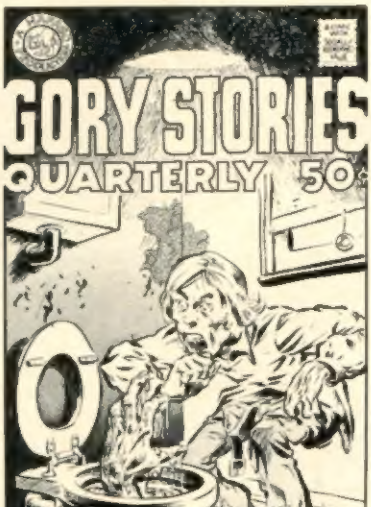
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